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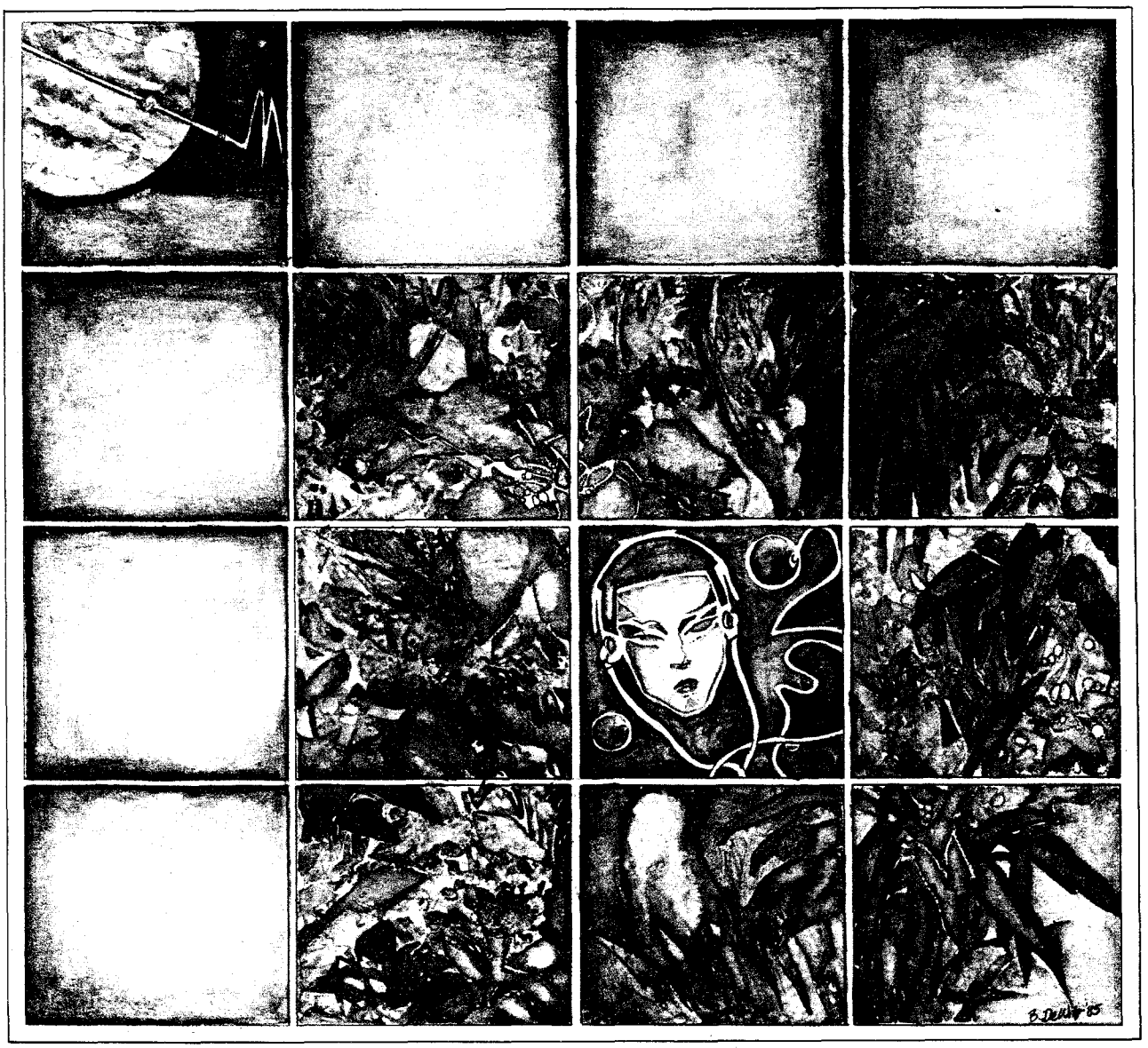

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Tibor Machan

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The Natural Man

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THE NATURAL MAN

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THE NATURAL MAN

This issue brings together a number of discussions of man's place in nature. Stephen R. L. Clark, Tibor Machan, and Jay Mechling explore the implications of the animal rights movement. Debating the "moral status of animals" (to borrow one of Prof. Clark's titles) is interesting not so much for what it reveals about beasts as for what it might tell us about what it means to be human. Our links with the rest of nature are discussed and argued every day and not just in philosophy classes. Our pulpits and religious broadcasts thunder with denunciations against the Darwinist blasphemy that reduces man to the status of a "tailless quadruped," and public school systems are becoming a battleground between the proponents of creation science and orthodox Darwinists.

These are serious matters with a great deal at stake—too serious to be turned into ideological footballs. Unfortunately, some conservative journalists have picked up the cute habit of pitting one school of evolutionist against another in order to produce the impression that the central tenets of the neo-Darwinist synthesis are still controversial among biologists. They are not. While these efforts cheer the hearts of obscurantists everywhere, their principal effect is to reinforce the smug isolation of scientists from the mainstream of intellectual discourse. The problem with Darwinism is not that it locates the origin of the human species among the primates, but that it is an ideology which claims to explain the meaning (or nonmeaning) of life. But it should be possible to take advantage of scientific research without embracing the ethics and metaphysics of the researchers.

Apart from ideology there are serious questions about our place in the scheme of things. Whether descended from apes or Adam and Eve, are we still a part of nature? What, if any, are our responsibilities to the rest of creation? The Sierra Club has one answer, most conservatives another. In the eyes of many environmentalists, the only good thing is nature uncontaminated by human contact. In his "Perspective" Allan Carlson dissects the Malthusian ideology. What binds together the advocates of "limits to growth," sex education, and radical environmentalism is a profound fear of human fecundity. They speak hysterically of a planet overridden by teeming masses of humanity. In Calcutta, these fears might be justified. However, anyone who has flown over Montana or even North Carolina would realize what a fragile foothold the human race has established on this continent. But in the eyes of environmentalists, "every prospect pleases, and only man is vile." No sacrifice is too much for *us* to make, so long as it will guarantee attractive vistas for backpackers and bird-watchers.

If the silliness of environmentalists poses a threat to economic development, some conservative responses approach blasphemy. NUKE THE WHALES is a funny slogan and makes a splendidly impudent bumper sticker. If taken seriously, however, it reveals a disturbing insouciance. A fragment of Greek verse sums up all too well the attitude of certain reckless industrialists:

> When I am dead, let earth
> be mixed with fire [i.e., let
> the universe be destroyed],
> for when I'm gone, I'll no
> longer care.

A few of the damn-the-pollution-full-speed-ahead boys might enjoy the Emperor Nero's emendation of the first line: not when I'm dead, but *while I'm alive*. One booster of Birmingham (Alabama) is said to have remarked, when the subject of his city's dirty air was brought up: "Pollution? Boy, that's not pollution you smell; that's money."

It wasn't too long ago that people saw a connection between conservatism and conservation. In America, at least, it was the liberals who were willing to "take the cash and let the credit go," and who had as little concern for the welfare of their descendants as they had for the wisdom of their ancestors. Back in the 1930's the agrarians (most, but not all, of them Southern writers like Allen Tate) were upset by what they rightly saw as a cavalier disregard for any good that could not be evaluated in economic terms. One of the most faithful of their number, Mr. Andrew Lytle, moved back to the country and has lived for years at the Log Cabin in Monteagle, Tennessee. These agrarians would now be described as politically conservative (if not downright reactionary), but their spiritual descendant—as a poet and defender of the land—Wendell Berry, is part of the environmentalist left.

You might say he was driven there. On the whole, the conservative movement has not made a positive contribution to conservation. Conservatives are justified in the ridicule they heap upon the heads of the Nature lobby and quite correctly emphasize the potential effectiveness of marketplace solutions to the problems of environmental pollution. They point out that many of our problems are not as critical as they have been made out to be; some of the worst were created by government, not industry. But conservatives too often insist on reducing an essentially moral question to the abstract dimensions of economics. Some of them speak as if we should be free to negotiate over the relative advantages of jobs and profits versus oil spills, lead poisoning, and contaminated water. They would have us believe that the extinction of a gen-

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uinely unique species of life (whether created by God or evolved in the course of millions of years) is a laughing matter. The only prominent American conservative who speaks out on conservation would appear to be James Buckley, whose single term in the Senate is a testament to personal integrity.

Real conservation—as opposed to the nuts and berries Malthusianism of the Sierra Club—*is* conservative; it is conservatism from the ground up. It is based on knowing our own limits, on recognizing that man was given *dominion* over the earth, not an empire won by conquest. For conservatives to repudiate all responsibility for the rest of nature does not, on the face of it, make a great deal of sense. If we claim to believe in the human heritage and in the traditions of our civilization, these traditions amount to more than platitudes about freedom and equality. They bind us with the generations who lived on this land before a revolution made us Americans. "The land was ours before we were the land's," celebrated Robert Frost. If we are willing to repudiate it, to despoil our inheritance like a spendthrift heir, we had best shed the pretense that we are conserving anything except our own self-interest.

The right's indifference to the environment is particularly deplorable for a less obvious reason. If the United States is going to save its natural inheritance, conservatives are going to have to do it. The government planning advocated by the environmentalist left would only make life as intolerable here as it is in the Soviet Union—which has, by the way, worse pollution problems than the U.S. Conservation (and restoration) efforts will require some of the reverence for life displayed by the right-to-life movement combined with the free enterprise know-how of our best entrepreneurs. It will also require a contemplation of man's place in nature and his relationship to what the Declaration once called "nature's God." cc

REVISIONS

The Scenery of Solipsism

A taste for landscape seems to be a universal human trait. We build our houses with an eye to the "view" as much as comfort. Landscape has generally played a large role in painting and literature, most often as a backdrop for the human drama. But near the end of the 18th century, "nature" (the word was fairly new in this sense) began to occupy the center stage, especially in Britain. James A. W. Heffernan in *The Re-Creation of Landscape: A Study of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Constable, and Turner* (Dartmouth/University Press of New England; Hanover, NH) outlines the problems of the Romantic approach to nature.

Romantic poets sought to be less "pictorial" than their predecessors, and contemporary painters wanted to break the authority of poets and writers to define their subject matter. Both efforts to defy tradition led almost immediately to contradictions. John Constable professed a desire "*to forget that I have ever seen a picture,*" to regard "Hill, Dale, and shady Woods" with the innocent "wond'ring Eyes" of Milton's Adam. Yet in this very declaration of independence, the painter was relying on the imagery of a 17th-century poet. Wordsworth was in a similar bind. Telling his reader to "quit your books" and to let "Nature be your Teacher," Wordsworth must have wanted to exempt the *Lyrical Ballads* from his proscription.

Even more problematic is the Romantic effort to "annihilate the past" by displacing every communal sense of history, religion, and myth with a "private history" of the artist's own unmediated encounter with nature. So Wordsworth in "Tintern Abbey" ignores the Cistercian ruin of his title while he transforms the imposing cliffs above the Wye into the walls of his own private "prehistoric cathedral." In the same way, Turner lauded painters who "even over history" highlighted "what was to them remarkable in nature." Turner followed his own rule and reduced Moses almost to a dot in his painting of the fire-dropping clouds of *The Fifth Plague* (which should have been *The Seventh Plague*), and he denied Hannibal any place at all in his portrayal of the snowstorm through which the Carthaginian led his troops.

All four artists struggled to invest thorn bushes, lime tree bowers, and remote valleys with extraordinary significance through the sheer force of their imaginations, entirely unaided by tradition, Scripture, or science. That way lies solipsism. Within Romanticism itself, Heffernan finds no solution to the quandaries of groundless subjectivism. What he finds instead is a flight from reality to appearances: virtually all the Romantics were entranced by the beauty of reflected images, and Wordsworth's call for an art that will "treat of things not as they *are*, but as they appear" had many echoes. Having repudiated every perspective upon nature except that of creative individuality, Romanticism finally gives us—as Hazlitt said of Turner's work—"*pictures of nothing and very like.*" cc

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MAN AND NATURE

Is mankind no more than a part of nature, subject to her laws like every other species? Or has the human race transcended natural limits and set itself apart as master of creation?

Since the dawn of the 19th century, the debate in the West on these questions has been heavily influenced by the proposition put forward by the Rev. Thomas Robert Malthus: that it is the "constant tendency in all animated life to increase beyond the nourishment prepared for it"; that mankind, too, is bound to the iron law of population.

Today, the controversy sparked by this proposition remains bitter, and surprisingly influential. Indeed, in an unexpected evolution of ideas, it now appears that it is through common opposition to this thesis that the "populist" and "supply-side" strands of modern American conservatism might find the unity that has otherwise eluded them.

The components of the historic debate ought first to be sorted out. Over the decades, the Malthusian thesis was several times rephrased. Before his death, Malthus shed some of the pessimism characterizing his first *Essay on Population* and placed hope in late marriage and other forms of "moral restraint." The "neo-Malthusians" emerging in the latter half of the 19th century argued that the population trap could be escaped through artificial means: the universal use of contraceptives. The environmentalists of our own era have stressed the limits-to-growth and the fragile attributes of the human ecology.

Anti-Malthusians, in contrast, have viewed the human race as unique in its ability to think, plan, transform, even co-create with God. The simple Malthusian calculations (food supplies grow arithmetically; populations geometrically) may apply to rabbits on an island or worms in a bucket, these writers say. Yet they do not apply to the human mind, which can invent new technologies defying any natural limits affecting the lower species.

In the past, it has also been true that the Malthusian controversy has usually cut across ideological lines, dividing rather than unifying political movements. On the left, orthodox Marxists adhered to the arguments of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who blasted Malthus for ignoring science, "the progress of which is just as limitless and at least as rapid as that of population." Socialist revisionists, however, followed the lead of Karl Kautsky, who insisted that the proletariat need not be the victim of overpopulation. Its use of artificial means of birth control, he said, would reduce the workers' immediate suffering and would also serve as a class weapon by reducing the "surplus labor" pool.

Division over the Malthusian proposition was no less bitter on the right. Orthodox Christians viewed men as made in the image of God, given dominion over the natural world. Moreover, the command "be fruitful and multiply" was seen—in Martin Luther's words—as "a divine ordinance which it is not our prerogative to hinder or ignore." Other conservatives feared that the logical end point of the Malthusian argument would be the denial of children and the decomposition of the family. Still others, the friends of capitalism, understood population growth to be an essential companion to economic expansion, creating new consumers, new producers, new markets.

Opposed to this anti-Malthusian right, though, was another array of conservative thinkers. They noted that the Parson Malthus penned his essay on population as an attack on those partisans of the French Revolution who believed in human perfectibility. Malthusian conservatives added that Malthus himself abhorred the use of artificial birth control and abortion. In recent years, Russell Kirk has praised the good Reverend for recognizing "the social and material evils" of industrializing civilization. Global overpopulation in the late 20th century threatens to drain away American energies into the support of teeming millions in "underdeveloped" lands and so "poison ourselves by wastes and pollution."

Allan Carlson is executive vice president of The Rockford Institute.

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There is more than a little truth in this perception, yet since 1900, these debates have proved increasingly to be mere academic exercises, setting the stage for a new formulation of the Malthusian controversy. The raw reality to be faced in our century is the overwhelming triumph of "neo-Malthusianism" as practice, rather than as idea. This victory came, in part, through alliance with the women's movement, whose agenda emphasized the achievement of voluntary parenthood. As the early German feminist leader Marie Stitt phrased the matter: practical Malthusianism was "the real innermost core of the woman question," the means whereby woman would "again come to be the mistress of her own body and of her own fate."

Indeed, this ascendancy of practical neo-Malthusianism was evident many decades ago. The Marxist anti-Malthusians, for example, were in full retreat even before World War I. Orthodox socialists like Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin, preaching at mass meetings against the artificial limitation of births, found themselves regularly hissed off the stage. Many Christian anti-Malthusians, moreover, began to evidence divergence between theory and practice. During England's famed 1874 Knowlton trial, involving the prosecution of several Malthusian leafleteers, it was noted that the clergy had families that were as large as the average of the whole community. By 1917, though, neo-Malthusian propagandist C. V. Drysdale could point to dramatically smaller families among the clerics, showing that artificial contraception had been widely accepted by this class. The conservative Malthusians had also been routed, in practice, as Drysdale cited figures showing "that limitation of families is practically universal among educated married persons in England at the present day, and that this is due to 'artificial restrictions' rather than to 'moral restraint.'" Even the leftish neo-Malthusians, in achieving their goal, found their ideological foci on "limits" and "birth control as a means of reducing poverty" giving way to an emphasis on personal pleasure, choice, and "rights." The private, individual benefits of contraceptive practice simply overwhelmed the ideological arguments of all sides.

Yet a critical question remained unanswered. Would people continue to bear sufficient children in the contraceptive society, where most offspring would be conceived by decision and where those social controls which channeled women toward childbearing were gone? Both the neo-Malthusians and feminists believed that the answer was "yes," that populations shaped by choice would move naturally toward a stable level.

Yet others of varied political persuasions began to sense that the answer would be negative. In France by 1907, deaths actually outnumbered births and Catholic theorists began to push for a countervailing family policy. German thinkers of the same era began to fret that a new view of life was gaining ground, one which cast children as an intolerable burden. Social Democrats, led by Alva and Gunnar Myrdal, warned the Scandinavian peoples that their nations' declining birthrates threatened them with depopulation and economic and social stagnation.

This "pro-natalist" reaction to the triumph of practical neo-Malthusianism subsided during the 1940's and 50's, though, as the unexpectedly sustained post-World War II "baby boom" seemed to confirm the optimistic projection. Indeed, dominant attention soon refocused on the dramatic population growth rates found in the "developing" nations.

With this turn, intellectual Malthusianism emerged reinvigorated. During the 1960's, panic over the "population bomb" extended to the Western nations, where even moderate growth rates were recast as a threat to all planetary life. Modern neo-Malthusian propagandists such as Paul Ehrlich had rediscovered the natural "limits" to human potential. In this new wave of panic, abortion-on-demand, the "child-free life–style," and widespread voluntary sterilization won the imprimatur of progressive opinion.

Predictably, Western birthrates began tumbling again. Today, the West German rate is two-thirds of what is needed to sustain even a zero-population-growth level. In Sweden, the birthrate is only .59 of that "replacement" figure. The United States, Great Britain, and France have also fallen below the no-growth level. The peoples of the West appear to be losing the will to renew themselves.

An irony lies in the fact that ideological neo-Malthusianism has been recently and thoroughly discredited as science. The "limits" of the Earth are proving to be far more elastic than the doomsayers have charged. The frantic predictions of the late 1960's seem laughable today, as both India and China are poised to emerge as food-exporting nations. The famines in Africa have clear political—rather than demographic—causes. Moreover, serious economists studying the relationship between population and economy, including Julian Simon and Nobel Laureate Simon Kuznets, have shown that moderate population growth actually seems to make a valuable contribution to social progress and economic growth. Yet the Malthusian specter remains, and the nations of the West exhibit a death wish.

However, a counterreaction appears to be emerging in the United States. Practical Malthusianism—the contraceptive society and parenthood by choice—is no longer at issue, with the large exception of the abortion question. Yet ideological neo-Malthusianism—the notions of "no growth," "limits," and "children as a danger"—does face a mounting challenge. In fact, "supply-side" conservatives interested in sustaining economic expansion and social conservatives interested in restoring a cultural and political climate friendly to families and children are finding the neo-Malthusian, "no-growth" specter to be a common enemy; indeed, a useful one. The most dramatic expression of this new vision came in the August 1984 position paper drawn up by the White House for the U.N. International Conference on Population, held in Mexico City. Breaking with three decades of official policy, this document blasted the "no-growth" objectives of international population control programs. In fact, the document argued, high population density actually seemed to make new jobs and economic growth more feasible, provided that governments gave proper incentives to those who worked, saved, and invested.

Pro-family advocates, pro-lifers, deregulators, and supply-siders all found themselves cheering the same compelling, intellectually vigorous document. The final irony of the great Malthusian debate may be that it is contemporary anti-Malthusianism which welds together these disparate groups into a lasting American conservative coalition.

—Allan C. Carlson

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Paranoia as Prudence *by Robert F. Geary*

"Believing where we cannot prove."

—Tennyson

Edith Efron: *The Apocalyptics: Cancer and the Big Lie: How Environmental Politics Controls What We Know About Cancer*; Simon & Schuster; New York.

For nearly two decades, secular prophets have intoned warnings of the terrible impending retribution for our technological sins (beginning with the original sin of the Industrial Revolution). According to the aggregate disaster scenario of Paul Ehrlich, Barry Commoner, the Club of Rome, and others, by now or very soon we should all be dying of cancer and/or starvation, on a poisoned and overcrowded planet depleted of all energy resources. True, the din of such ferociously righteous predictions has of late abated—some of the nightmares having missed their appointments, others having upon examination dwindled to problems of less spectral proportions. Nonetheless, we hear, weekly it seems, the brief drumroll of doom as another substance once thought harmless is claimed by someone somewhere to "cause cancer." Our reactions are likely to mix fatalism ("everything gives you cancer anyway"), suspicion ("can this really be true?"), and defeatist resentment against the killjoy scientists who must, after all, know what they are talking about. As the list of cancer-causing substances becomes apparently endless, we shrug in dismay, wondering if perhaps there isn't more to the story.

"Edith Efron would like to shake the cancer-fighting agencies to their foundations with this book, and perhaps she will."

The New Republic

Robert Geary is head of the English department at James Madison University.

Several years ago Edith Efron set out to find the answer to this question. A graduate of the Columbia School of Journalism and author of *The News Twisters*, she began by asking if the "epidemic" of environmental cancer (what one CBS report called "The Cancer Pox") was being invented or inflated by the news media. She found instead that the media conveyed fairly accurately the tone and substance of the message given them by regulatory agencies and their scientists. But that message itself was distorted. It is the regulatory bureaucracy and not the press that she holds responsible for the myth of a cancer epidemic which has disquieted the public. Journalism, limited to coverage of daily events and the surfaces of actions, simply conveyed the official version of the dangers of "environmental cancer." Ideologues like Ralph Nader wailed about "corporate cancer" and a "carcinogenic century." But it was the regulatory agencies, by policy decisions and public statements, which obscured the fierce and unresolved scientific debates, the acknowledged uncertainties, and the leaps of faith behind the dire judgments the agencies handed down.

How did it happen that the healthiest people in human history came to see themselves as the helpless prey of hidden chemical killers? Part of the answer lies in the apocalyptic intellectual climate of the early to middle 70's, a doomsday faith which sees Faustian technological man destroying himself and his world. Amid such hysteria, every problem of pollution or disease could be envisioned as only the latest instance of corporate genocide. Tinged with such paranoia, the public and its legislators asked: How can we *really* know all these new chemicals are not secretly destroying us? That there might exist no evidence of danger from any particular chemical brought no reassurance, since the lack of evidence could only mean that science had failed to discover the hidden danger. Nor did it ease fears that scientists discovered carcinogenic properties in industrial substances before finding the same in nature; the lag gave credence to the idyllic picture of a pure and balanced nature disrupted by industrial civilization. In this view, cancer is the price man must pay for the repressive disharmonies of a bourgeois order.

All this might by now have evaporated, like other recent manifestations of fashionable guilt, had not such panic achieved legal power in the scientific (NIH) and regulatory (OSHA, FDA, EPA) agencies charged with carrying out a program of cancer prevention. A scare engendered by ideologues hardened into "prudent" regulatory decisions which carry judicial authority and shape public opinion. In her heavily documented work, Efron probes beneath the public image of regulatory knowledge to find the reality of scientific ignorance, confusion, and disagreement. She reveals how bureaucrats turn the most fragile "findings" into fiats.

The ominous regulatory warnings about potential carcinogens rest on two related assumptions. The first is that animal tests predict cancer in humans. The second is that there exists no threshold, or safe dose, of any substance if that substance has been found to induce cancer in any animal at a higher dosage. Both assumptions are controversial. What causes cancer in one animal does not necessarily have the same effect on another species. What is more, the no-threshold theory defies the basic axiom of toxicology, that the dose determines the

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poison. Our injunctions to smokers to quit are based on studies showing that the dangers from cigarettes are cumulative and reversible.

As if to insure a paranoia, regulatory agencies decree that even experiments of very questionable reliability are to be given weight if they suggest health hazards, whereas any question of an experiment's reliability will discount reassuring results. Small wonder, then, that cancer-causing substances seem everywhere. Given such a combination of criteria and the lack of clearer knowledge about the actual nature of the disease, the ordinary person is not far from wrong in thinking fatalistically that sooner or later scientists will find just about everything on earth causes cancer.

By questioning the standards used to label substances as carcinogenic, *The Apocalyptics* diffuses the fear that we are all living in Love Canal. The book clearly establishes that the list of suspected carcinogens has grown so long because of the decision by the cancer-prevention establishment to adopt controversial "worst case" approaches in the name of being "prudent," "cautious," even "conservative." Crucial decisions, in short, have been dictated not by scientific proof but by moral, political, or public policy considerations. Such judgments may at bottom depend upon whether scientists view industrial civilization as a benefit attended by specific problems or whether they see it as a vast threat to humanity, a Faustian pact with destiny.

But the public has no hint that such nonscientific judgments may lie behind the pronouncements of the experts. Hidden are the disputes within the scientific community over the value of animal testing or the validity of the no-threshold theory. In the prolonged public ignorance of the scientific quarrels, Edith Efron sees evidence that there exist two cultures, a scientific and a literary or humanist, the second unable to interpret accurately the first. As a result, we are left only with the interpretations of science provided by ideologues or regulatory officials.

Understandably, the regulators are less than eager to publicize the shaky scientific foundations upon which their efforts are built. Cancer prevention, Efron concludes, is at best an immature science. Steadily finding more complexities than answers, the science offers no firm basis for regulation. Its promise of being able to prevent cancer is as much of an illusion as the supposed epidemic which helped engender its mandate. Unwilling to modify their extreme hypotheses, the agencies can only issue endless warnings which ultimately are belied by the very existence of the audience, still somehow alive in this alleged carcinogenic hell.

Efron, it should be said, in no way dismisses the idea that environmental agents can cause cancer. But what has established the dangers of asbestos and a dozen or so other known (as opposed to suspected) carcinogens are epidemiological studies, not extrapolations from animal tests. Nor does an anti-scientific bias taint her study; indeed, her anger falls on what she sees as abuses of science for political, social, or ideological ends. Efron charges that research conclusions are distorted by policy concerns. The result, Efron fears, could be that the public, having heard too often the cries of "wolf," may one day dismiss science and ignore real, if specific and limited, hazards.

It may indeed be from the author's devotion to science that the problems of the book stem. Efron describes *The Apocalyptics* as the "intellectual detective story" of her discovery of a "cultural crime which should not be possible in a free society." Her work, accordingly, has the tone of an indictment. And while grateful that this book has been written, the reader is equally happy to finish its 400 pages of detail, drawn from thousands of articles and books. The tone of relentless criticism, moreover, ill suits Efron's urging that cancer research cease to be conducted in the spirit of a morality play. Most troublesome perhaps is that, after her incessant castigation of regulatory agencies for awarding a preferred status to certain theories and methods, she offers epidemiological inquiry as her only alternative.

Regulatory agencies have justified their departures from orthodox methods precisely by saying that the traditional approach of investigating the histories of victims hardly suits itself to preventing people from falling prey to dangerous new substances. Efron cites these regulatory arguments to show that the agencies do know they are acting as if certain unproven beliefs were true; but she does not otherwise answer these justifications. The reader expects that somewhere in this long work the author will posit an investigative procedure that will offer a middle ground between a process which finds no substance "safe" and one which protects no one until a data base of victims has accumulated.

"The shame of it all is that Miss Efron is highly skilled in the difficult task of translating science for the layman. She is a good explainer of the intricacies of cancer testing and interpretation. But when she proceeds on to political analysis and conspiracy theorizing, she gets swamped by her materials and preconceptions."
The New York Times Book Review

This impasse may result from the limits Edith Efron imposes upon herself: writing as a nonscientist to laymen, she refuses to make any scientific judgments. Her purpose is not to decide scientific controversies, but to inform us of the intense disputes hidden by regulatory officials. The ways whereby fierce debates, contradictory investigations, and conflicting theories —the normal activity of science exploring a new field—have become invisible form the real subject of this valuable, if difficult, book. Whether the work will lead to a public debate and, in time, a less hysterical approach to regulation, one cannot say. Those responsible for the "processed science" Efron lacerates enjoy entrenched power. To attack them is to invite scorn as a minion of corporate greed, an enemy of public well-being, and a despoiler of the environment. But *The Apocalyptics* lays out the facts behind the scare headlines. It deserves to cause a stir and to overturn a regulatory paradigm which enshrines paranoia and invites endless, blind interference. ∞

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Importing Trouble, Exporting Hope *by William R. Hawkins*

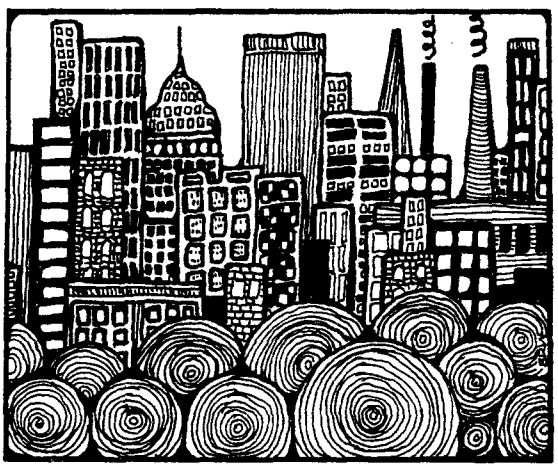
"One scene of arts, of arms, of rising trade . . . "
—James Thomson

Kevin P. Phillips: *Staying on Top: The Business Case for a National Industrial Strategy*; Random House; New York.

Michael J. Piore and Charles F. Sabel: *The Second Industrial Divide: Possibilities for Prosperity*; Basic Books; New York.

David F. Noble: *Forces of Production: A Social History of Industrial Automation*; Alfred A. Knopf; New York.

The period running roughly from 1965 to 1980 was one in which America was in decline both at home and abroad. The loss of military superiority and the war in Vietnam; economic stagnation and record inflation; tears in the social fabric from crime, drugs, and abortion; and the political destabilization engendered by Watergate, the New Left, and congressional government. These developments all drew policy responses by conservatives



to counteract their effects. The right gained national power on the promise not only to conserve but to restore America's greatness.

There is, however, one major problem which the right has failed to confront. The problem of America's loss of industrial leadership. Although total industrial production in the U.S. continued to grow during the period, progress was slow. In some key sectors, such as steel, autos, machine tools, and petrochemicals, there were actual declines. American manufacturing productivity increased at a rate only one-sixth that of Japan. Imports penetrated the U.S. market at an increasing rate (from 4.3 percent in 1965 to 13.9 percent in 1980) while America's share of world exports fell. In 1984, the U.S. posted a record trade deficit of over $120 billion. Nearly three million jobs in industry were lost. For an economy which still cannot reduce unemployment below 7 percent, this is not a trivial matter.

The industrial policy debate has raged for a decade. It began with the defense industry. After the massive resupply effort mounted during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, it was discovered that the U.S. industrial base did not have the capacity to replace the equipment shipped to Israel rapidly. From here, concern spread to the rest of the industrial sector. The worsening trade situation in the 1970's brought more attention to the problem as factories closed and unemployment increased. Yet, despite the speeches, books, and articles, little had been done. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger in his 1983 report noted:

> The serious decline in our economic base and in our leadership of the industrialized world . . . problems which remain in the defense industry are, in fact, a sub-set of our overall economic industrial problems.

The debate has accomplished so little because the two schools which have dominated the debate have little to offer. The neoliberal advocates of an industrial policy have had a not-so-hidden agenda behind their surface concern for productivity, capital formation, and technology. That agenda includes increasing the direct management role of the Federal government in business and in saving the power of organized labor. Their aim is to have the Welfare State absorb the corporate sector. Their tracts usually attack business management and give pride of place to redistribution over reindustrialization.

Against these plans, the libertarians have been fairly successful in arguing that it is better to do nothing than to bring back the New Deal. However, the libertarian position is based on the classical theory of free trade, a theory which has never been an accurate description of reality. The inability of so many libertarians to take account of the part played by nationalism and power politics in international economics makes their input largely irrelevant.

Kevin Phillips offers a third option which should appeal to conservatives as much as it does to businessmen. He uses the term industrial "strategy" rather than "policy" to emphasize that his role for government is to create an environment within which American business can successfully operate, rather than have government play a direct role in making business decisions. He places this strategy in the center because it calls for a government more active than libertarians can accept but a policy committed to probusiness objectives which are anathema to the left. Since his book is primarily directed to the right, he makes a point of attacking the libertarians who have had their most paralyzing effect on conservative opinion.

Free trade no longer exists, if it ever did. The advanced nations which have built large industrial complexes cannot allow them to collapse without jeopardizing their long-term economic strength. Developing nations realize the importance of heavy industry and technology—the multiplier effect of high value-added production and employment—and seek to build a strong manufacturing core. At stake is control of the world's most strategic wealth-producing units. The key to success is the expansion of markets

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both at home and abroad. The stakes are too high to trust the outcome to uncontrollable events in other nations or to a global "invisible hand." Competition produces winners and losers. Those who do not play to win will lose.

Phillips provides a solid overview of the "neomercantilist" policies pursued by the expanding Asian economies led by Japan and by the Europeans. Foreign nations commonly subsidize their industry either directly or through low interest loans and public investment in research. The fact that capital costs to U.S. firms are twice as high as for foreign competitors is of prime importance. Foreign nations take import restrictions, export incentives, business tax breaks, cartels, state preferences in buying, and government coordinated marketing arrangements as commonplace. The economic success of the capitalist nations, especially of those in the Third World, have been pointed to with pride by conservatives as proof of the superiority of private enterprise over socialism. Yet, this success has not been built on the capitalist theories of Smith and Ricardo as much as on the capitalist theories of Mun and List. This should not disturb conservatives. As Phillips argues:

> The managers of Japan, Inc., have used the leverage of government planning and power to promote a generally conservative economic system and set of cultural values. . . . Progressive academicians prefer to skirt such recognition, that the values of MITI are not those of the Harvard Faculty Club . . . that 'industrial policy'—a neomercantilist business-government partnership—has enjoyed its most substantial successes under conservative or right-wing regimes like those found in Japan, Gaullist France, Brazil and Taiwan. That's probably because such governments have meant business in both senses of the word.

Conservatives long ago discovered that on the issues of national security and social order there was more to their beliefs than the sparse contents of classical liberalism. It is time that that same discovery was made in regard to economics. It would actually be a rediscovery. It was not too long ago that most conservatives shared the views of Alexander Hamilton's "Report on Manufactures," Henry Clay's "American System," and the Republican protectionism of the Gilded Age, policies which supported America's rise to Great Power status.

Phillips lists 15 needed reforms. The most important is a new cabinet Department of International Trade and Industry (DITI) combining the Commerce Department with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. The aim would be to create a unified policy to replace the *ad hoc* measures which result from the tangle of existing agencies, all of which have their own special interests. The U.S. would not be the first to copy Japan's MITI; most nations have an equivalent body. The Thatcher government acted to combine its trade and industry ministries in 1983.

Phillips's other major points include tax reform to spur capital formation by shifting from income taxes to consumption taxes; increased export credits; the removal of antitrust barriers to joint research and export ventures; increased support for R&D and for the education of students in the sciences; and a restructuring of labor-management relations to involve the worker more closely with the firm. Worker support for increased productivity would be purchased with improved job security and retraining when needed.

An outright return to protectionism can only be avoided if foreign nations can be persuaded to open their markets to more U.S. exports and to curb some of their own "unfair" export activities. Phillips favors such negotiations. However, if reciprocity cannot be negotiated, the U.S. may have to take more direct steps to safeguard its domestic market in lieu of expanding into foreign markets. The U.S. accounts for more than one-quarter of the entire world economy. Unlike many other nations, our internal market is sufficient to maintain our industrial base, providing American firms are free to dominate it.

Phillips's proposals are the result of two years of interviews with leading corporate managers and his usual detailed reading of public opinion. Business feels that the government should be an ally in the global competition for markets and jobs. The Reagan Administration has moved the state from hostility to neutrality, but that still leaves U.S. firms outgunned by business-government partnerships in other lands. Supply-side economics has helped, but has not gone far enough.

"Phillips hasn't just missed the boat. He seems oblivious to the fact that it has sunk."

National Review

In the past, industrial policies have been favored only by specific regions, mainly the Northeast, but now Phillips finds support nationwide. The movement of business from the Frostbelt to the Sunbelt has served to involve all parts of the country in the global economic war. Imports threaten both low-tech and high-tech firms. There are steel mills in Alabama as well as in Pennsylvania. Polling shows clear majorities behind proposals far stronger than those made by Phillips. If conservatives do not act, an opportunity may be opened for the liberals to return to power on the economic issue. However, since the underlying theme of an industrial strategy is nationalism, the right is the logical place from which a credible policy should emerge and gain support.

Examples of the liberal approach to industry which might gain ground if conservatives fail to address the issue adequately are provided by Michael Piore, Charles Sabel, and David Noble. Piore and Sabel are labor economists primarily interested in worker control of business and other "humane alternatives" to the existing system of corporate capitalism. Their book sports endorsements from professional egalitarians Lester Thurow and Michael Harrington.

What Piore and Sabel label as the first "industrial divide" is generally called the Industrial Revolution: the shift from small-scale production by skilled artisans to mass production by semi-skilled factory workers. They are unhappy that this shift occurred be-

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cause it led to Big Business and the subordination of the working class to the dictates of corporate planning and economies of scale. It is their contention that the current crisis in manufacturing can provide the opportunity to move back to a system of small-scale production that can be decentralized and thus subject to more democratic decision-making.

The rationale is that computer-based production techniques allow greater variety and flexibility. Goods no longer need to be standardized to fit the assembly line. There is room for smaller firms doing "customized" production. This may be true, but it hardly leads to a rejection of mass production. Computer-directed machinery, robots, are still subject to economies of scale and will become even more so as the capability/cost ratio for computers increases. Robots will actually allow large firms to service smaller submarkets with efficiency.

Social historian David Noble takes a look at the evolution of business, but with the same bias. His thesis is that mass production techniques were adopted so as to shift power from the skilled workers to the new management class by centralizing authority. He sees the appeal to economic efficiency merely as a tactic for disarming critics of inequality.

Critics of Big Business have always understated the power of mass production, yet that power continues to grow. It is why the global battle for market share is so intense. Studies by the Boston Consulting Group and the Strategic Planning Institute indicate that doubling output can cut per unit costs by 20 to 30 percent. Scale economies are not necessarily exhausted even when a firm's share of the world market exceeds one-third. The Japanese and West Germans were the first to put this principle to work in their drive for ever-larger export markets. Americans were slow to recognize that their shrinking market share, both at home and abroad, made their position steadily weaker.

Ironically, the "friends of labor" attack the very system which has elevated industrial workers into the middle class. Piore, Sabel, and Noble are heading in the wrong direction for the wrong reasons. That is why they must argue against allowing economics or technology to determine industrial structure. They favor decisions made by political and social forces. In the early 1800's there were attempts to establish communes and utopian factory systems as alternatives to mass production, but they folded because they could not compete against the new, more efficient capitalist methods. None of the three authors care for this kind of competition, but it is inevitable. Their pessimism about the ability of "progressive" forces to move the country in their direction in the face of "corporate privilege" is the only bright spot in their presentations. cc

Future Directions? *by Edward J. Lynch*

"The way up and the way down are one and the same."

—Heraclitus

Newt Gingrich: ***Window of Opportunity: A Blueprint for the Future***; TOR Books; New York.

Robert Kuttner: ***The Economic Illusion: False Choices Between Prosperity and Social Justice***; Houghton Mifflin; Boston.

The idea of progress provides much of the rhetorical foundation of modern politics. Everyone favors movement in directions that are identified as "progressive," and "retrogression" is universally a term of abuse. This vocabulary dominates our rhetoric, encouraging politicians to flow with the tide, frequently without regard for a comprehensible sense of direction. Even as they urge us forward, leaders are uncertain about whether we are headed up or down.

The results of the 1984 election are only the most meager indication that our national eminences are adrift without rudder and compass. This drift affects all the academic disciplines. Economists can give diametrically opposed analyses of our economic ills, not merely because of differing notions of economic health. Our colleges and universities prove deficient in their teaching, less because of the diminished skills that our high school graduates bring to institutions of higher learning than because of the lack of a sense of purpose in all but a few colleges and universities. Discord among academic disciplines sows the seeds for a society that no longer comprehends any common notion of just what it is that makes one form of society more desirable than others. Our national media reflect this confusion, providing a proliferation of perspectives, few of which are more than unrooted responses to sequences of incidents that the sages themselves do not comprehend.

Two recent books illustrate this division of the American mind on the question, "Which way is up?" Kuttner offers a tour guide of societies that provide "better" examples of social progress than the United States, and laments the difficulty of designing the political road map that would get us from our current vale of tears to his more equal (in material terms) society. Kuttner uses the terms "equal" and "equitable" nearly interchangeably, and he has no conception of life beyond the possession of material goods. He shares the economic prejudice that more is better, asserting that people should have more medical care, housing, unions, education, social services, and other things that European Social Democrats routinely transform from a demand into a need.

Although Kuttner acknowledges that his preferences are for a more equal distribution of material wealth, and that transforming these prejudices into public policies is a political question, politics is not his topic. Michael

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Walzer and William Ryan have asserted the primacy of equality of economic results, and Kuttner takes that as sufficient. Kuttner writes merely to reassure his reader that other states have combined more equal distribution of wealth with relative prosperity in a democratic order. He seems confident that, once comparative economics provides the evidence that it could be done elsewhere, we will leap into action to achieve such a social order here. In short, he would like a transformation of American politics that would enable us to import Swedish and Austrian policies. In effect, "up" is really "down." Societies are to be judged in terms of their treatment of the worst off among them, which in practice means the portion of national income that is "distributed" to the poorest quintile of the population.

What is it about Austria and Sweden that make them icons in the establishment religion of progress? These model societies have combined strong labor organizations, relatively low unemployment rates, extensive entitlement programs, comprehensive economic planning, and relative internal harmony. With nearly homogenous populations, these nations have few social questions that cultivate the seeds of discord. As long as the economic pie continued to grow, the politics of redistribution were tolerated in these countries. Kuttner admits uneasiness about sustaining such policies in economically difficult times.

Kuttner's ideal society is the small republic, societies that can be peaceful because they have no great causes to fight. As nations with relatively few industries, people throughout the country recognize that the health of each industry is important for the national economy. Industries themselves rarely come into direct conflict, in part because the investment decisions of national economic planners strengthen the nation's winners and prevent effective formation of opposition or proposals for alternative industries. When Austria, for example, is developing a national economic plan, it must consult the heads of 16 labor unions. The president of the AFL-CIO has far more contesting organizations to contend with.

These nations have no ambitious, large-scale national projects, and they discourage large-scale ambition at the individual level. Kuttner claims that average Swedes tolerate the nation's confiscatory tax rates, but neglects to mention Bjorn Borg and Ingmar Bergman, who took their talents abroad when marginal tax rates reached 102 percent. Just as these nations think small in their industrial and distributional policies, they encourage small thinking in international dealings. They do engage in international commerce, but only with a limited range of merchandise. The Swedes don't like it when Soviet subs patrol their waters, but nothing in the Swedish navy is likely to deter determined Soviet admirals. Kuttner significantly neglects to mention that the United States has greater international responsibilities that prevent it from devoting as much of its resources to the "distribution of society's wealth" to "the poor" as, say, Austria. Kuttner is blind to the possibility that a great people might want to accomplish great deeds, and he would be mystified by the notion that one would have to look beyond the material prosperity of the poorest to find visions of great projects. Kuttner is silent about people's souls, a silence which is entirely fitting. Anyone with a soul might ask him, "Why should Americans want to make their society like Austria?"

Newt Gingrich, in contrast, knows that down is not up. When people ask Gingrich for his vision of a good society, he looks less to the individual material wealth of the citizens than to the dreams that inspire them. When he speaks of looking up, his outlook is fixed on the stars. He thinks that American society has not had a real sense of purpose since President Kennedy promised to put a man on the moon in a decade, and he believes that we can accomplish a great deal more in space. Want a few ideas? How about laser technology for more effective defense? Are some processes for combining metals impossible in earth's gravity? Why not try manufacturing on space stations? Do we need a perfect vacuum to achieve certain laboratory conditions? Space has the vacuums in much greater quantity than they can be manufactured on earth. Are we getting tied up in our own phone cables? Take it in stride; satellite communications will provide less restrictive communications at a cheaper rate in the near future.

Gingrich believes that our vision of a better future has been limited by our leaders' inclinations to view people as victims. The appropriate question for a victim is, "How can we improve your life, since you are so unable to help yourself?" Gingrich argues that this perspective has led to the establishment of the Liberal Welfare State, a form of rule that builds upon the current problems of favored classes and limits the opportunities of others, including the nation at large. The result of a Liberal Welfare State is a nation that tends to view itself as victims, and depends upon others to rescue it from a series of mishaps.

Gingrich does not believe that a diminished sense of public purpose is a fitting way of life for a great and free people. He recognizes, however, that escaping from the traps of Liberal Welfare State thinking requires reorientation on the part of public officials. In short, leaders must act as if they had some idea of the purpose of freedom. Gingrich realizes that a free people will develop a great number of ideas and activities to create their own improved world, as long as they have the opportunity to do so.

Gingrich's alternative to the Liberal Welfare State is the Conservative Opportunity Society. His vision of opportunity extends the same principles to every sector of American life. He has

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unbounded confidence that the American people can accomplish a great deal. Where people do not think of themselves as victims, they are likely to seek ways of contributing that most of us can barely imagine. Gingrich rarely criticizes the institutions of the Welfare State directly, in deference to the good intentions of legislators who established them. He does, however, dwell on many of the anomalies that have resulted from the extended operation of institutions that view their clients as victims. It cannot have been the intention, for example, of the planners of Medicaid to spend countless dollars on institutionalized care when home care of comparable quality could be achieved at one-tenth the cost. The planners of AFDC programs could not have intended to establish a program that encouraged teenaged girls to get pregnant as a means of escaping parental guidance. Public housing programs ought to provide the homeless with essential housing, not construction subsidies to developers where existing units are already vacant. Where such contradictions between intentions and operation of the Liberal Welfare State come into view, Gingrich wants his fellow citizens to look for ways in which things could be different. Then he strongly urges people to work for change.

Gingrich draws freely from sources rarely cited by conservatives. A conservative citing John Naisbitt's nine trends as "inevitable"? A conservative treating Alvin Toffler as a serious social commentator? A conservative invoking Carl Sagan with approval? Few things have united these observers other than their hostility to traditional ideas and their opposition to the principles that Gingrich appears to embrace. At first glance, one is tempted to suspect that the ideas are linked by an intellectual form of chicken wire. Upon a closer reading, one recognizes that a Christmas tree is a more appropriate frame of reference. Gingrich hangs lots of ornaments here and there, but the trunk and the roots are planted in solid soil.

Although the reader can admire the dexterity with which Gingrich juggles the ideas that he raises within the framework that he creates, there are still elements of the overall package that rest, at best, uneasily. Gingrich recognizes the disciplinary role of hard work, and stresses that true accomplishment requires habits, inclinations, and character that do not mesh well with the perspective dominant among liberals in American society.

In affirming the necessity of disciplined work in developing opportunities for progress, the author believes that we will experience a restoration of the more fundamental values of our society. He never contemplates that technological innovation might be a mixed blessing. His thesis is in sharp contrast to Schumpeter's argument that capitalism presents an unceasing series of demands for changes in society. Where Schumpeter saw persistent pressures for changes as society's undoing, Gingrich sees such pressures as symptoms of the society's efforts at renewal and reaffirmation of its most basic principles.

Gingrich never really confronts the hard cases. Will the moral character of our society improve if an "effective" morning-after pill makes abortion mills obsolete? Are we better off with more elaborate television communications if the tube communicates pornographic movies? In *The Gulag Archipelago,* Solzhenitsyn recognized that modern technology is essential for the Soviet Union to operate a prison and torture state on a massive scale. Gingrich recognizes the contemporary Soviet state as an abomination, and stresses the contributions that technology can make to improved national defense. One almost suspects that his gaze is so fixed on opportunities above and beyond current limits that Gingrich has neglected to consider the darker inspirations of human conduct. The authors of *The Federalist* shared, in a measured degree, Gingrich's apparent confidence in the American people. They differed, however, by acknowledging that serious political theory must take account of the less-than-beneficent acts of some people and provide appropriate remedies.

These are strange times we live in, when political clichés are turned on their heads. Gingrich and Kuttner provide an interesting spectacle of an establishment calling itself liberal confronted by a revolutionary calling himself conservative. cc

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles of Culture*:

The Arts of Lying

"A related symptom of media power is the fact that *other powers* are literally fighting for its attention and favorable judgment. Mighty Churches, States, corporations, syndicates, universities, cultural institutions model their views and actions in such a way as to present aspects approved by the media. Nothing today has *status* unless it is affirmed or confirmed by the media—which can just as rapidly take it away, too."

—from "Ideological Temptation of the Media"
by Thomas Molnar

ALSO

Momcilo Selic deciphers the enigma of Milovan Djilas

Arthur Eckstein reveals the "conservative" mind of George Orwell

Brian Murray examines the dwindling of short fiction

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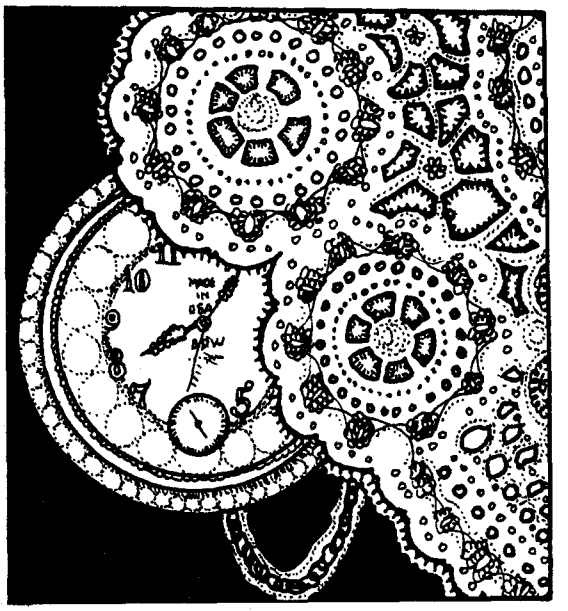
Nostalgia Trips *by Dennis Q. McInerny*

"Long ago there was something in me but now that thing is gone. . . . That thing will come back no more."

—F. Scott Fitzgerald



Douglas Unger: *Leaving the Land*; Harper & Row; New York.

William McPherson: *Testing the Current*; Simon & Schuster; New York.

It would be off the mark to regard Douglas Unger's *Leaving the Land* and William McPherson's *Testing the Current* as no more than the latest contributions to the cult of nostalgia which, still it seems, has a firm grasp on American culture. But if the two novels rise above the phenomenon, they nonetheless bear some relationship to it. Reading them had the effect on me of rekindling an old curiosity. Why is it that so many Americans in recent years have found solace in looking back longingly on a past they imagine to be superior to the present? Is it, I wonder, one of those grass-roots movements which are actually inspired and sustained by the mass media?

First of all, it has to be acknowledged that all peoples everywhere tend to gild the past and to lend it a luster it probably never had. Memory has a way of being kind. But all this is something which is not only inevitable, but necessary and even healthy, for a people that does not keep track of the past soon finds that it has lost its identity and sense of purpose. However, this kind of healthy awareness and innocent doctoring of the past is not what we find in media-cultivated nostalgia. A healthy regard for the past is essentially realistic. It has the salutary effect of grounding a people more firmly in the present. Nostalgia, on the other hand, is escapist. The dedicated devotee of nostalgia wants to recreate a past which is carefully selected and scrupulously edited. By devoting himself to the idol he has created, he can excuse himself from the irksome demands of the present. He does good neither for himself nor for his society.

The current wave of nostalgia reveals something about ourselves which, if widely recognized and positively acted upon, could ultimately redound to our benefit. What is being revealed, for those with eyes to see, is the pervasive anxiety of spirit now besetting the country. The attention being paid to the decade of the 30's and the Great Depression is a telling point. The films and books devoted to the Depression show Americans managing to maintain through those dark days a sense of dogged determination and even a wry optimism. The creators of these exercises in nostalgia often seem confused and amazed by this spiritual heroism. On the face of it, the mood of the American people in the 30's and the mood of the American people today should be the reverse of what they appear to be. Today, in terms of material well-being, we have it pretty good; yet our morale is lagging. Conversely, the people of the 30's were often weighed down by the most serious kinds of material difficulties, yet they had not lost their gumption. We are a people, today, who are considerably short on gumption, and the reason for this has little to do with the physical conditions of the society in which we live. Although they may not be fully conscious of the fact, I think that many of those who nurture a nostalgic affection for the 30's are indirectly acknowledging the spiritual poverty of the age in which they live. What they are recognizing, albeit dimly, is that 50 years ago the spiritual atmosphere in the country was denser and richer. It is not simply a question of the people of the 30's being tougher and more durable than people today; rather, the case is just that there were in those times appreciably more people in the country who lived according to the supernatural virtue of hope.

Leaving the Land looks back at rural life in western South Dakota during the 30's and 40's with an indigestible mixture of hurt, respect, and pious devotion to the ideal of the American yeoman farmer. The novel is caught between two traditions. On the one hand, it is in that tradition of American literature, dating from the post-Civil War decades of the 19th century, which took rural life as its theme and whose tone was mainly disparaging. More specifically, this literature irreverently called into question the classic Jeffersonian notion that life on the land is the wholest of lives and that those who stay close to the soil stay close to their humanity. Writers like E. W. Howe, Hamlin Garland, and Ole Rölvaag showed through their fiction that life on the land, especially if the land happened to be in the Middle West, was not always what it was cracked up to be by Eastern idealists. It had a decidedly grim side to it; it could deflate as well as ennoble the human spirit. Under the worst conditions, it could crush. This tradition in American literature was kept alive in the 20th century by novelists like Sherwood Anderson and Erskine Caldwell, and by poets like Edgar Lee Masters.

But Unger seems to want to cast his lot—if only half-heartedly—with the Jeffersonian tradition as well as with those who buck it. The result is a novel which falls between two stools. And the ambivalence which results from this is debilitating. That ambivalence is found in sharpest focus in the

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character of the novel's chief protagonist, Marge Hogan, who is herself the quintessence of ambivalence. She is meant to be regarded, for all her foibles and failings, as a noble sort, whose tenacious loyalty to the land deserves our respect. But, looked at squarely, Marge Hogan proves to be a remarkably undistinguished human being, and we should not be deceived into interpreting her intemperate and often indiscriminate bursts of energy as the signs of an edifying inner strength. She is weak. She is in fact quite ambivalent in her attitude toward the land. But she is also ambivalent in her attitude toward her husband, toward her boyfriend, toward her son, toward herself. In sum, she is a house divided. The novel presents us with her "message to the world"; expectantly we accept it, we open it, and we find to our disappointment that we are staring at a blank piece of paper. The Marge Hogans of the world are legion, and they have nothing to teach us.

Testing the Current, like *Leaving the Land*, is set in the 30's; but that is just about the only point on which they can be profitably compared. McPherson's story is much more controlled and more deliberately shaped than Unger's. The story takes place within the bounds of a 12-month period in 1938-39 and concerns a young boy, Andrew Thomas MacAllister, whose fortunes we follow as he makes a passage from his eighth to ninth year. Tommy MacAllister belongs to a wealthy, Midwestern family, and in the persons of his mother and father, his two older brothers, his various friends, neighbors, and acquaintances, he is surrounded by an array of remarkably unprosaic human beings. So far, we might say, charming, but nothing really extraordinary here. But the story is being told to us by young Tommy MacAllister himself, and that, in the manner in which McPherson brings it off, is truly extraordinary, a *tour de force*. The boyish voice we hear throughout the work is authentic and convincing; we feel as if we are seeing the world through the eyes of an eight-year-old. McPherson has accomplished an impressive feat of the imagination.

The novel begins with a quotation from Stendhal, to the effect that originality and truth are to be found only in details—obviously the principle which guided McPherson in his writing. *Testing the Current* fairly floats on details. Every nook and cranny of the young protagonist's consciousness is examined, sometimes from more than one perspective. Frankly, as I read on through the novel I kept waiting for the whole thing to collapse, for details to begin to cloy and dullness to set in. But it never happened. McPherson maintains masterful control over his material, and everything that went into the story had a purpose and contributed to the intrinsic logic of the narrative—well, almost everything.

The one real flaw in the novel is a scene toward the end of the work in which a young Black provides Tommy with a lurid and detailed description of an act of sexual intercourse he had witnessed. What is wrong with this scene is not simply the crude language employed in it—so joltingly incongruous to the language of the novel as a whole. No, what makes the scene so wrong is its almost totally gratuitous quality. Not only does the scene not serve the main purposes of the novel, but it actually militates against those purposes. What prompted, I wonder, this loss of nerve, this unfortunate concession to vulgarity?

All too many writers—Unger, for example—fall back on the expedients of sex and violence as an escape from the hard work of character development. A similar, if less noticeable, tactic is the depiction of eccentricity, which reveals an incapacity to come to grips with real people, or even believe in them. The writer avoids the task of striking the mean in developing characters. In saying this I do not intend to imply that he should be striving for a kind of noncommittal blandness, but rather that he should try to discover the complex truth between the extremes of sanctity and satanism to be found in the overwhelming majority of human beings. In choosing eccentricity, he chooses distortion. Characters are writ large but crooked. The focused depiction of eccentricity, raising eccentricity almost to the level of a norm, amounts to a kind of caricature of human nature. Too much of it has just the opposite effect upon readers from what the writer intended. A surfeit of eccentricity in fiction contributes towards the creation of a world whose main claim to fame is that it is simply bizarre, and bizarre for the sake of being bizarre. That, after a while, gets boring.

Unger's novel is marred by the presence of too many characters whose primary value rests in their eccentricity. Also, there is too much violence in the book which seems calculated to meet no other purpose but to titillate the reader—a little excitement thrown in to stir up the lads dozing in the back row. These may be only faults which a young writer will inevitably outgrow. As for McPherson, he is already a polished craftsman, and for him, one's hope would be that he not allow himself to be enchanted by the siren song of easy notoriety, that he trust the best instincts of his considerable talent. ∞

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Free Market Energy: The Way to Benefit Consumers; **edited by S. Fred Singer; Universe/Heritage; New York; $8.95.** Need more gas for cars and more electricity for air conditioners? Simple, say 12 leading energy authorities: just turn off government regulation and turn on entrepreneurial initiative.

The Rising of the Moon **by Gladys Mitchell; St. Martin's Press; New York.** Mitchell was in her day considered a rival of Dorothy L. Sayers and Agatha Christie. In this classic detective novel, first published in 1945, she outdid the competition and raised the thriller to the level of literature.

Fore!: The Best of Wodehouse on Golf **by P. G. Wodehouse; edited by D. R. Bensen; Ticknor & Fields; New York; $7.95.** At his best, Wodehouse was a comic genius. His talent for social whimsy is shown to its dottiest advantage on the manicured greens and in the isolated society of English golf courses.

The Meaning of More's 'Utopia' **by George M. Logan; Princeton University Press.** In a serious reexamination of More's political theory, Logan locates More in the tradition of Plato and Aristotle. The *Utopia* emerges not so much as a work of Christian humanism (much less of satire) but as a corrective both to humanism and Machiavellian political theory.

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Animals and "Other Awkward Cases" *by Jay Mechling*

"[After creating man] He immediately created other animals besides. God's first blunder: Man didn't find the animals amusing—he dominated them, and didn't even want to be an 'animal.'"
—Friedrich Nietzsche

Bernard E. Rollin: *Animal Rights and Human Morality*; Prometheus Books; Buffalo, NY.

Mary Midgley: *Animals and Why They Matter*; University of Georgia Press; Athens, GA.

Wednesday, the 24th of April, 1985, was one of those days when the "mental vertigo" (as Mary Midgley calls it) of our modern ethical thinking fell full force upon the citizens of my home campus, the University of California at Davis. What had begun slowly as a movement among students and faculty to protest the university's investments in companies doing business with South Africa had culminated in the declaration of April 24 as a "strike" day on which a good many students boycotted classes and rallied peacefully on the plaza in front of the administration building, renaming it "Bishop Tutu Hall." Speakers denounced the racist system of apartheid and called upon the Board of Regents to divest the university's holdings (and the regents' own personal investments, as well) as a way of bringing pressure upon the South African government to end brutal racism and extend basic rights to Black South Africans.

By coincidence, April 24 was also planned by coalitions of animal rights organizations to be the international "World Day for Laboratory Animals." A few dozen protestors organized by the local chapter of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) held a mock funeral procession ending with a protest at the university's Primate Research Center, civil disobedience (trespass), and peaceful arrests.

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That same week the media were covering in detail the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe. Newsreel footage replayed the liberation of Bergen-Belsen and of Buchenwald, and critics from across the political spectrum protested President Reagan's plan to lay a wreath at the graves of German soldiers (including 47 members of Hitler's SS) at Bitberg.

The images all collide: racism, research on animals, genocide. Peter Singer's book *Animal Liberation* (1975) set the rhetorical ground for the collision, introducing in that book a notion of "speciesism" analogous to "racism" and "sexism." Cannily, the animal rights protestors draw upon the power of the Holocaust in their rhetoric of protest and in their visual images of "innocent" animal victims staring at us from behind bars or strapped into devices of scientific torture. Mengele was a scientist, too.

Away from the rhetorical heat of the front-line protests, there is a growing body of literature, pro and con, on the moral status and the rights of animals. Much of the debate is between philosophers, occasionally joined by a scientist or two; but, clearly, it is the philosophers who are defining the issues and limits of the conversation. Moreover, there seem to be more distinctions and differences between people who *agree* on the matter of the moral status of animals than on any other disputed issue in American public discourse.

The books by Bernard Rollin and Mary Midgley nicely illustrate this last point. Rollin, the American professor of philosophy and of veterinary medical ethics at Colorado State University, and Midgley, the British Senior Lecturer in philosophy at Newcastle University, both stand on the side of widening the scope of our moral community to include animals. Both share a commitment to the gradualism of Darwin's evolutionary thinking, both see in the modern science of ethology a new scientific basis for including animals in our ethical systems, and both address the general, intelligent reader. Beyond this, however, Rollin and Midgley construct such different arguments that by juxtaposing the two we come to realize how many political and social issues this topic touches. It may well be, in fact, that it is these other issues that these books are "about."

Rollin's goal is first to establish in nontechnical terms the philosophical basis for the moral status of animals and then to apply that moral ideal to the "problems" of research with animals and pet animals. (Rollin purposefully omits food animals, deferring to Mason and Singer's *Animal Factories* and to Michael Fox's *Farm Animal Husbandry and Ethology: Ethics, Productivity, and Welfare* as admirable treatments.) Rollin does not deny that there are differences between humans and animals, only that there are "morally relevant" differences. The rationalist tradition from the Enlightenment established the foundation for our present treatment of animals. Animals cannot be moral agents, argued Kant, because they lack language and, therefore, reason; but they can be the objects of our moral concern. Descartes denied animals even this much.

Rollins draws upon our everyday, commonsense experiences and upon

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the empiricist tradition of Hume to argue that animals do behave "rationally," at least by the measures we have that human beings are rational. That is, some animals seem to follow contracts with other animals and with human owners, will tend to injured members of the species, will show altruism, will "act guilty" when caught stealing, will solve problems, will use tools, will anticipate or remember pain, and so on. But even Bentham's Utilitarian focus upon pleasure and pain does not provide a sufficient account for taking animals as objects of moral concern. Rollin takes on the burden of proving animals have "interests."

His argument is that every living thing has—as Aristotle said—a *telos*, "a nature, a function, a set of activities intrinsic to it, evolutionarily determined and genetically imprinted." For a living thing to have "interests" is for it to have needs that matter to it, and it is "our ability to nurture or impede fulfillment of these interests, not the pleasure and pain, that make it enter the moral arena." The modern science of ethology provides us with a startling array of evidence of interests, extending down to insects, worms, and planaria, thereby including these creatures in our scope of moral concern. Rollin concludes, therefore, that animals have a basic right to be dealt with as moral objects, regardless of the specific moral principles one might hold. And if "being alive is the basis for being a moral object, and if all other needs and interests are predicated upon life, then the most basic, morally relevant aspect of a creature is its life."

Rollin does not hold that the "right to life" is absolute; weighing moral trade-offs is a part of everyday life, and respecting an animal's rights does not mean subordinating or sacrificing one's own interests. But Rollin does want us to understand that any violation of the right to life must be defended with strong moral reasons. In addition to the right to life is a living being's right to its *telos*, to "the kind of life that its nature dictates." Like the right to life, this right is not absolute, but violations must be justified. Ethology again serves us, for an animal's *telos* is for Rollin a scientific, testable matter.

Rollin sees in the arguments of legal philosopher Ronald Dworkin (in *Taking Rights Seriously*) the basis for establishing the legal rights of animals. Dworkin's attack on legal positivism accomplishes two things for Rollin's case. First, Dworkin reasserts the necessary connection between law and morality; and, second, Dworkin holds rights as the safeguards "of the moral status of the individual and his human nature or *telos* against the pressures of social convenience or general welfare that might otherwise tend to submerge his individuality and crucial interests."

For Rollin, then, the moral status of animals implies their entitlement to legal rights. Present law, represented by the Animal Welfare Acts of 1966 and 1970, is totally inadequate in Rollin's view. What we must do is work toward case law and legislative action extending animals' legal rights. Having established the theoretical foundation for animal rights, Rollin turns his notions upon the twin practical "problems" of research with animals and of the status of pet animals. Throughout the last half of his book, the author invokes two principles to aid in deciding how we are to act toward animals. The *utilitarian principle* demands "that the benefit to humans (or to humans and animals) clearly outweighs the pain and suffering experienced by experimental animals," and the *rights principle* requires that, in cases where research is justified by the utilitarian principle, "it should be conducted in such a way as to maximize the animal's potential for living its life according to its nature or *telos*, and certain fundamental rights should be preserved as far as possible, given the logic of the research, regardless of considerations of cost."

No abolitionist, Rollin counsels his readers to work realistically for reform and urge scientists to work on the three alternatives (the "three R's) to present practice in animal experimentation: reduction of number of animals used, refinement of procedure to reduce pain, and replacement of laboratory animals wherever possible. Rollin targets the education of scientists and of veterinarians as an area where reform makes a difference, and he testifies convincingly from his own considerable successes, including the creation of the first course anywhere in veterinary medical ethics. Rollin is incisive in explaining how the sociology and rhetoric of science sustain a particular cultural ideology of health and illness and how our culture needs a substantial "gestalt switch" in perceiving the moral relevance of animals. The empathy we have for our own pet animals is, for Rollin, the most promising source of that shift, and he calls for nonrevolutionary legislation that will demand fitness and responsibility from the human owners of pets.

Midgley takes a very different tack, though her case overlaps Rollin's at several crucial points. She joins the assault on the rationalist foundations for our present view of the moral status of animals, looking to ethology (as does Rollin) to establish that we really have no better evidence for inferring the subjectivity and consciousness of animals than we do of humans. Midgley departs from Rollin on the crucial matter of *rights*, which she calls "a truly desperate word." Seeing not much chance of salvaging the word "for any clear, unambiguous use in this discussion," Midgley chooses instead *equality* as the pivotal concept for bringing animals into the sphere of human morality.

Using the notion of "equality" as the lever on the issue of animal rights

BOOKS IN BRIEF

'Mined with a Motion': The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins **by Marylou Motto; Rutgers University Press; New Brunswick, NJ; $22.50.** Rescues Hopkins from unsympathetic modern critics. Hopkins, who realized the futility of the Romantic project of uniting man and nature in poetry, went back to the older tradition of Donne, Jonson, and Herbert.

Beyond Reagan: Alternatives for the 80's; **edited by Alan Gartner, *et al.*; Harper & Row; New York.** What a shame that the democratic process somehow got in the way of these brilliant plans for overthrowing Reaganism through "citizen participation."

Flannery O'Connor's Library: Resources of Being **by Arthur F. Kinney; University of Georgia Press; Athens, GA; $25.00.** What the author of *Wise Blood* and *The Violent Bear It Away* read and underlined in Maritain, Faulkner, Dostoevski, *et al.*

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permits Midgley to explore issues ignored by most other writers on animal rights. She unveils persuasively, for example, the symbolic meanings of women and animals in human cultures, noting the mystery and danger we find in that symbolism and concluding that these deep meanings are significant barriers to the equality of these creatures. She sharply criticizes social contract thinking, both because its model of reciprocity limits its ability to deal with animals, "women, slaves, aliens and other beings suspected of not being proper contractors" and because it privileges speech as the way contracts are made. Ethology and anthropology have taught us, says Midgley, how much more important is nonverbal communication for creating order among living beings. And she finds fault with Singer's creating "speciesism" as a parallel for racism and sexism. Her view is that species loyalty can be a natural bond rather than a hierarchical evaluation. What we should do is learn to appreciate the "mixed community" of beings and their subjective states. If we take animals to have subjective consciousness deserving equal treatment, then we are likely to appreciate and befriend them.

It is commonplace for anthropologists to think of Nature as presenting itself to us pretty much as an undifferentiated continuum of experience, a "stream of consciousness" William James said. One function of culture, in this view, is to order that stream, to name the distinct parts, and to treat the ambiguous in-between zones as mysterious, as dangerous, as taboo. The advocates of a moral status for animals tend to emphasize the continuum, insisting that evolutionary theory posits both continuity between life forms and very small steps along the 20th-century Great Chain of Being. Rollin and Midgley push even further in this direction, relying fearlessly for their test cases upon the taboo zones where being human and being animal overlap, as in Rollin's example of the ape with a tested IQ of 85, higher than many "retarded" humans, or in Singer's claim that many apes surpass human infants and brain-damaged adults on several measures of what we take to define humanity. Why draw attention to these tabooed zones at this time, 1975-85? What does the exploration of these zones have to teach us about our human *telos*?

I think these intellectual currents have much to do with the women's movement, with feminist theory, and with the effects of the movement upon the status of children in American culture over the past two decades. From this perspective, the talk about animals is also talk about the moral and legal status of women and children. Sometimes the talk is coded, but at other times it is quite direct. Rollin's examples often point to "how the study of the moral status of animals can illuminate dark areas of human ethics," such as euthanasia. Rollin makes his case for granting legal rights to animals by pointing to the relevant analogy: the legal rights of children, who are not the property of their parents and whose rights can be pressed in courts by social welfare agencies, guardians, and the like. The current public concerns about child abuse and about the abuse of animals may be reflections of the same basic breach in our moral theory.

If animals stand for children in Rollin's argument, then his argument for animals' fundamental rights to life leads inexorably to the issue of abortion. Rollin must realize the additional controversy inherent in pursuing his point, for he mentions this connection only once, early in the book, and offers it only as a personal example of the way the dialectic between moral intuitions and moral theories is making him rethink his previous pro-choice position.

Whereas animals might stand for children in Rollin's discussion, in Midgley's they stand for the whole class of "different" creatures who lie outside the mainstream of white male power and morals. Midgley's recurring theme of the crisis of liberal political theory, for instance, reminds me at times of a more recent book, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (1985), in which sociologist-of-religion Robert N. Bellah and four colleagues examine the moral vocabularies of American individualism. Discovering the limits of "utilitarian" and "expressive" sorts of individualism, Bellah and his coauthors conclude that "perhaps only the civic and biblical forms of individualism—forms that see the individual in relation to a larger whole, a community and a tradition—are capable of sustaining genuine individuality and nurturing both public and private life."

Midgley's chapter on "Women, Animals, and Other Awkward Cases" makes the same case, noting that the rationalist tradition has treated similarly the rights and moral status of women, slaves, nonwhite races, and nonhuman animals. Her later chapters on "the Significance of Species" and "the Mixed Community" argue for the alternative model of bonding and kinship within diversity and flexibility, a model that begins in evolutionary biology but extends easily enough to legitimate plural human societies. Midgley's argument—harmonizing with recent feminist theory, stressing kinship and moral community, substituting "equality" for "rights," dissenting from liberal contract theory, insisting upon evolutionary cooperation over competition, and seeking to balance reason and emotion—contrasts sharply with Rollin's. But the two philosophers would land on the same side of most practical questions regarding the treatment of animals.

As one who has read the scholarly literature of the debate over animal rights and has talked with animal rights activists who march the long marches, stand vigil outside primate research centers, and engage in civil disobedience in order to be arrested and make their case in public court, I must say that Midgley's book seems more relevant than Rollin's to the American moral intuition that is sustaining the movement. Rollin's arguments and reform strategies serve well enough the veterinarians and other insiders who are likely to be able to write the legislation and legal briefs extending legal rights to animals, but it is Midgley's intuitions that capture the style and most radical content of the protest. For as gentle as Midgley's book is, hers is a critical vision that sees clearly the spider's web of assumptions connecting disparate phenomena in Western culture and that is capable of unmasking the ideology of even some other advocates for the moral status of animals. ∞

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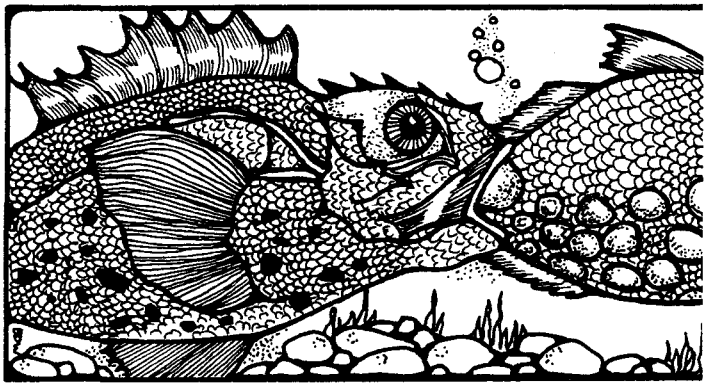
RIGHTS OF THE WILD AND TAME

by Stephen R. L. Clark

Conservationists tend to be shy of using any arguments but the merely "economic," partly in the odd belief that these are more "rational" than other and overtly "sentimental" ones, and partly because "economic" reasoning seems likely to appeal to a larger audience. Economic arguments are not bad ones: it is indeed incompatible with any sort of economic prudence to destroy the fertility of the land, create monocultures that are susceptible to epidemics, pollute rivers, and drive species to extinction which might have proved to be useful. Given our habit of thinking only of the short-term and local gains that we might win by intensive farming or forestry, it is often quite reasonable of conservationists to remind us that there are long-term costs.

Passing beyond these merely "economic" arguments, conservationists turn to "scientific" or even "aesthetic" considerations. Even if we must admit that some patch of land will never be "economically" profitable (never produce a separable and salable commodity), still we must preserve it as being "of scientific interest," or "to satisfy recreational needs." Biologists enjoy studying it, and anybody may enjoy looking at it or walking through it. These are all good reasons for insisting that the care of the countryside cannot be left entirely to those who make direct, economic use of the land. Some immediately profitable uses may prove very unprofitable to us all, in the end (as overgrazing the commons does in the famous parable elaborated by G. Hardin in *Science* in 1968). Any of us may have an interest ("scientific" or "aesthetic") in making sure that there is a countryside to study and to walk in, not just a rural factory, whether that factory is run by capitalistic owners or by bureaucratic soviets. Besides, the idea that "economic" or "scientific" motivation is "rational," while "aesthetic" motives are not, really does not bear examination. Why is it all right to say that a piece of land should be preserved so that future generations may have food they like or interesting objects to study, but sentimental to say that it should be preserved so that people may cool their spirits by enjoyment of a rich and varied landscape?

But although it seems quite reasonable to me to insist that we have other goals in life than being fed or making sure that farmers and foresters can make a profit, it is also as well to insist that there are further, moral considerations to take into account. We need not, and should not, think only of our own good: there are other creatures in the land than us. This discovery is always a difficult one to make: many of our imperialistic predecessors, busily exploring the globe and claiming it for the Empire, were doubtless well-meaning



gentlemen. They honestly thought that things in general would be better managed if they and their friends were in control (and they were, just occasionally, right), that "savages" had no real rights against them. Some took it for granted that it was their right to use and abuse "natives" for the commercial profit of the British, and would doubtless have been susceptible to arguments that it would be as well not to fish the pool dry, not to destroy a useful source of day-laborers.

Others insisted that, after all, native populations should be kept uncontaminated as a precious "scientific" resource: we should be ready to forego immediate profit for the sake of knowledge. Others again actually enjoyed strolling through lands they perceived as "untamed wilderness." What none of them really appreciated was that the "natives" might have views of their own, that the "savages" had real rights not to be conquered, tamed, and exploited. Even genuinely humane men, who insisted that the savages not be caused "unnecessary suffering," took it for granted that they could not run their own lives for themselves, that any white man effectively "owned" any native, even if the latter was not called a slave.

I wish to suggest that we take this seriously as a message to conservationists. We are not the only creatures that live within the land, and have a long-term interest in the continued health of the land. When Aldo Leopold urged us

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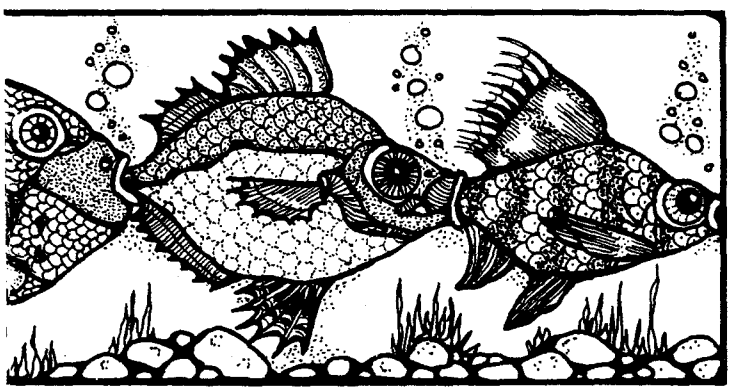
in *Sand County Almanac* to think of the land not as a commodity but as a community, he intended to remind us that there were other lives than the human at stake. Just as our predecessors were slowly brought to think that "natives" were not only more or less valuable resources, but fellow members of the community of rational decision-makers, so the conservationist who is moved by Leopold's rhetoric should acknowledge that the health of our fellow creatures is itself a good reason for not polluting the land, and not grabbing for our own purposes all that we imaginably could.

Those who look to the land for recreation or scientific research may in the end be as dangerous to our fellow creatures as the most shortsighted of agriculturalists. "We should not burden the wilderness with this egocentric human purpose. The wilderness," explained Fraser Darling in *Wilderness and Plenty*, "does not exist for our re-creation or delectation." My thesis is that, just as we should respect the life and autonomy of "natives," irrespective of the commercial, scientific, or aesthetic profit we get on the deal, so we should respect what the Koran calls the



"nations" of bird and beast. We should not just spare them pain (so long as we can still achieve our own goals): we should acknowledge that their rights may prevent us from justly achieving all our goals. They feed upon the land, upon the myriadfold terrestrial ecosystem, as we do; they are our evolutionary relatives and like us do not know where they came from nor where they are going. Many of their desires and feelings we can sympathize with; and even when we cannot, we can recognize that only parochial conceit (of the kind that imperialists suffer from) will imagine that only "our" concerns are really important, that only "we" can live our lives as they should be lived.

Wild things who live in the same land as we do have, R. Mabey points out in *Food for Free*, as much claim on the wild products of the land as we do: as much right, and often very much more need. Unless we are prepared to say that mere strength and cunning is a good reason for allowing one creature "rights" that others do not have, we have no good reason to say that "we" have a right to a squirrel's nuts (any more than the white men had a right to the natives' crops and labor). Allowing that natives and squirrels, variously, have rights is to say that there are moral limits to what even well-meaning despots may do, even despots with good taste.

The serious question is: what rights are there? Rights, in moral philosophy, are understood to form a coherent system: no one has a right to do to another what that other has a right not to have done, although the first may have some interest in doing what the other has an interest in resisting. What rights there are, in short, are to be found by discovering what all creatures might, without self-contradiction, be required to do or refrain from doing. This is a formula derived from the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, who rationalized his devotion to human interests by insisting that nonhumans could only be tools, and material, for human purposes, that they could not be conceived to have any goals of their own. Even Kant was not entirely consistent in this, any more than white imperialists could always escape the suspicion that natives were individuals too. If we abandon the arbitrary line that has been drawn around the human species and understand that all creatures are members of one community, the terrestrial biosphere, we can ask what rules might obtain in that system.

Some authors have denied the possibility of treating the land as a genuine community, within which moral agents might have moral duties. It is true that not all members of such a community are in any position to recognize the fact (any more than many human beings are); it is also true that there are frequently irresoluble conflicts of interest between its members. Neither of these points seem to me to make the community-model unusable, but it must be admitted that (short of the millennium) the rights of wild things will not be quite as extensive as some have expected "human rights" to be.

There can be no general rights to live without hurt or harm, to be forever protected from assault or starvation: there can be no such right because to protect it in some creatures would be to abuse it in others. The worm has no right not to be killed and eaten—any more than I do. It does have a right (for this right can be equally apportioned) to live out its life under the law. The blackbird injures no right in killing for her needs: she would do so if, somehow, she conspired to make it impossibly difficult for other creatures to live out their programs, to enjoy their moment (metaphorically) in the sun. We are obliged to do only what all creatures can be conceived to be obliged to do: to take our turn. It is not unjust (though it may be regrettable) if we kill simply to survive as the sort of creatures we cannot help but be: it is unjust if we plot to cover all the world with our machines and art objects and artificially maintained "wilderness areas," without regard to the claims of other creatures.

The best available land-community, the ideal that we may reasonably hold in view, is one that lives up to the occasional (though inconsistent) demand of ecologists for variety: a diverse and variegated landscape is one that allows as many creatures as possible their time in the sun. Such a land-community is not to be valued solely because it is, in a sense, more "stable," nor because it is (to us) more aesthetically pleasing, but for the same reason that a liberal democracy is valued, as allowing as many as possible to live out their lives, not as slaves or material for another's purposes.

In plotting our land-use, accordingly, we should take care not to claim too much. In making this suggestion, I stand within the Judeo-Christian tradition—despite the

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abuse which conservationists regularly heap upon that tradition. The Hebrews were required not to harvest the edges of their fields (Leviticus 23:22), and to leave the land fallow every seven and every 50 years, explicitly to allow the wild things space to move and grow (Leviticus 25:6f). They were not to hunt any creature to extinction (see Deuteronomy 22:6f), and always acknowledge that the life belonged to God alone, not to them. H. M. Kallen observes in *The Dimensions of Job* that the book of Job culminates in God's answer to human impatience: "God describes Himself as the wisdom that makes for the survival of the wild ass, the hamster, the eagle, the ostrich, of all living nature." As I have argued in *From Athens to Jerusalem* human beings have no special place, no special rights in nature.

If our relations to the wild things should be governed by a vision of this sort of cosmic democracy, the ecosystemic community, what of our relations with the tame, the domesticated creatures of our farms and households? Here, too, a notion honed in political philosophy has its uses: the social contract. Alongside the general duty to respect the autonomy of our fellow humans, acknowledged by Kantian moralists, there are more local, national duties to keep faith and care for our fellow citizens, to obey laws justly made. Although no actual human community ever began in an explicit bargain to play fair by one another, not to break the rules of the bargaining community, we can still assess the present state of a human group by asking whether its members would rationally have consented to the bargain they live under: Do they all stand to gain, in whatever terms they prefer? All of us, for example, stand to gain from the maintenance of a civil community in which disputes are resolved by recourse to legally established courts which display no systematic prejudice against any particular group: even if we lose occasionally we would all lose far more if we were forced to live in a state of nature, subject to the wills of all those stronger than ourselves, or if it were accepted that judges might be biased towards the class of their choice.

Can the same be said for the contract of domestication? Once again, it does not much matter how it came about that humans domesticated nonhumans—though it is worth remarking that it was probably this long experience of interspecies cooperation that has given us the capacity to sympathize with and understand nonhuman animals. Possibly dogs and humans really did recognize mutual advantages in their cooperation. But we can still assess the situation by referring to a notional contract even if the first domestic dogs were strictly captives or salable commodities, as J. F. Downs suggested in the 1960 *Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers*. Most human groups, after all, probably began in war and slavery: how they began matters less than what they are now.

As a cautionary fable, at least, we can suggest that humans, horses, dogs, and cattle began by cooperating: humans provided skills of forethought and care, and the animals provided assistance, companionship, transport, milk, clothing, even meat. T. Ingold's 1974 study in *Man* of the changing historical relations between Lapps and reindeer suggests how easily this contract may be manipulated for human benefit: because the strength is ours, because (once the gods have abandoned us) it is we who have to enforce the observance of the contract on ourselves, there is clearly a powerful drive towards treating the animals first as unequal partners and then as commodities, without any contractual rights at all.

But though it may be difficult to remember this, we ought to assess our practices by referring to what might rationally be accepted by all parties. Probably, given our known bias, we should try to lean over backwards to give the benefit of the doubt to our less powerful partners. We should not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn, and (most emphatically) should not deny to our domestic animals those personal relationships of care and affection that most human groups have learned to give, and which are, Darling asserts, the animals' right once we have domesticated them. This model certainly does not answer all questions, nor does it instantly validate that system of interspecies relations which I would myself think best: it does not, for example, positively prove that we ought not to rear animals whom we intend to kill and eat. This is perhaps an advantage if it is to seem more than a convenient rationalization of my own moral preferences: whereas I am myself very unsure that it would be rational of cattle to accept care and feeding on condition that their male calves are culled to feed the carers, it is certainly arguable that cattle might have preferred this to being culled by wolves, without any corresponding care. They might: I do not think that people would accept such a bargain for themselves. And no one would suggest that it would be rational of cattle to accept intensive farming: What imaginable goal of theirs is reached by this?

The ideal to which we may look without exaggerated optimism is a countryside in which humans so manage their uses, agricultural, scientific, or recreational, as to allow the maximum possible use of the land to other wild creatures: the rules should be the fine democratic principle of "maximum liberty compatible with an equal liberty for all" (a rule, be it noted, that not only allows but requires definite efforts to restrain the overweening). Domestic animals, including farm animals, should be regarded as partners, paying their way and being owed a corresponding care and affection. It has always been difficult, of course, to manage the delicate emotional strategy of caring for a creature whom one plans to castrate, kill, and eat.

As the message slowly sinks in that human beings are not of a radically different kind, that we may communicate with creatures of other species even if they are not clever, I would expect the contract of mutual profit to be changed. Many creatures would be bred back to the wild state, and take their places as fellow members of the land-community, hunted perhaps but no longer expected to feel gratitude for being slaves. Contrary to the views expressed by J. Baird Callicott in 1980 in *Environmental Ethics*, there is no good reason to think that domestic animals are wholly denatured, incapable of autonomous existence. But the practical difficulties of "animal liberation" are quite real. That liberation is a long-term goal: in the near future it will be enough to allow the wild things their place, and give the tame things what they are owed, in terms of a life well-lived. That, after all, is the bargain all of us might rationally have made—to live as members of our civil community at the price of being asked, some day, to die for it. cc

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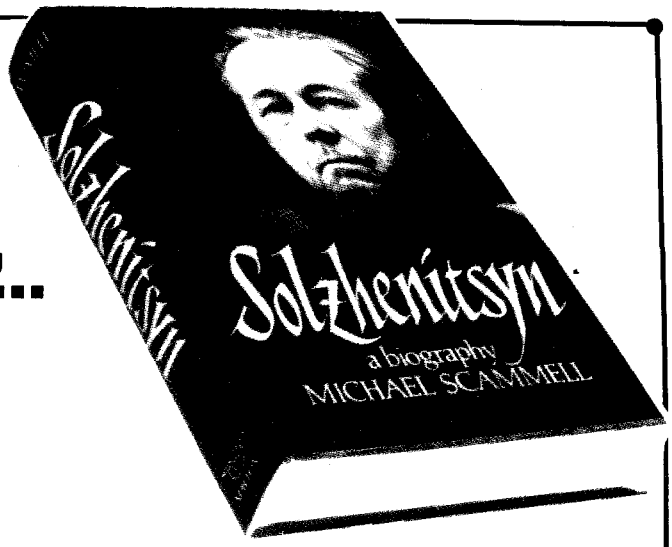

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DO ANIMALS HAVE RIGHTS? *by Tibor R. Machan*

In recent years we have seen a growing phenomenon dubbed, not very surprisingly, the animal liberation movement. The main theoretician of animal rights is Professor Tom Regan, professor of philosophy at North Carolina State University. Other supporters from the theoretical side are Professor Peter Singer, of La Trobe University in Australia, although Singer speaks only of animal liberation. That is because as a utilitarian, who advocates that we all must advance the greatest happiness of the greatest number (of those capable of being happy), he follows Jeremy Bentham in rejecting anything like basic rights.

In more popular forums, Cleveland Amory is the most widely known defender of animals against their use as human food or resource for medical research. Various Hollywood celebrities have helped to popularize the issue. Recently CBS's *60 Minutes* devoted a segment to the movement.

What is at stake is relatively simple. Do animals have rights similar to those we as human beings are said to have? If animals do have rights, then by implication the government is responsible for protecting them from being killed, assaulted, or used against their will. Even the utilitarian support for animal liberation has similar practical implications. *Animal liberation implies vegetarianism and anti-vivisectionism.*

It is crucial to note that the issue is not simply kindness to animals, nor that animals should be treated with greater consideration for their capacity to feel pain. The kinds of stories usually told (and movies shown) to buttress the case for animal liberation do tend to paint a horrid picture of the pains human beings inflict on animals. Of course, it is not entirely clear just what animals do feel; so much of what we are told and shown gains its impact in part from our awareness of how *we* would feel in similar circumstances. But there is little doubt that animals can feel pain and pleasure and that some of what human beings do to and with them causes them great displeasure and, at times, excruciating pain.

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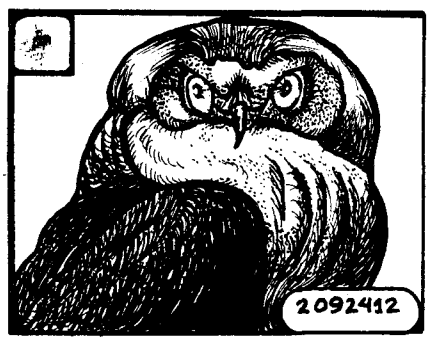
The issue of whether treating animals in these ways is right or wrong and what we should do about it is tied to the animal liberation movement. But that movement has far more radical aims than improvement of the ways we handle the animals which we use for food, for medical research, and for sports. The animal liberation movement holds that animals are not different from humans in any respect relevant to how they should be treated by us—except, of course, that they cannot speak out in their own behalf or protect themselves against us. Yet this last turns out to be a crucial exception. Because animals cannot defend themselves, they depend on us for their protection. It is indeed here that one begins to appreciate why the animal liberation movement is not, as it claims to be, analogous to the liberation of Black slaves or women.

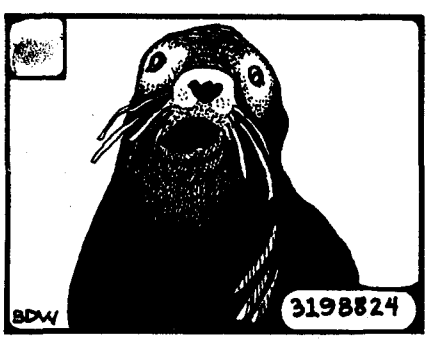
In these cases human beings were clearly oppressing their own kind. Blacks were enslaved by whites, but except for their color no morally significant difference could be identified between the two groups. The same is true about women. They were kept second-class citizens, away from political and economic power, by other human beings who could not by any stretch of the imagination argue that women lacked "freedom and equality," the qualifications John Locke identified as necessary for citizenship.

Let us be clear about this. Animal liberationists do, in fact, claim that their movement is just a logical extension of the Black and women's liberation. Why? It is important to realize that they are convinced that between other animals and human (or rational) animals there are no significant differences. We, like other animals, are capable of feeling bad and feeling good, of seeking out some goals that we prefer, and this makes us all equal. But this capacity for feeling and preference is not a sufficient basis for equality.

To understand this we need to have some idea of what counts for moral significance. When we consider matters of morality, we are interested how, most fundamentally, we should act. Ethics or morality concerns itself with finding the answer to the question "How should I act?" But this does not tell the whole story yet. We need to consider what underlies our concern with morality.

Underlying the moral question is the thesis that (a) we are free to act (as well as free not to act, if we so choose), and (b) that some standard for deciding the meaning of "should" can be identified. We are free and able to be good or evil. If we cannot choose, the entire issue is moot, and if we cannot find a moral standard, then any claim about what someone should do would be as valid as any other (contradictory) claim, which would render the whole idea of morality unintelligible.





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Morality or ethics requires free will and a standard of value. Philosophers have debated these issues for as long as we have been aware of them, and they will continue to do so. But this does not mean there is no answer, only that answers are not easy or uncontroversial.

As far as the issue of free will is concerned, this is vital for the present discussion, because a standard of value concerning animal life is not that difficult to identify. It simply consists of whatever enhances their health and welfare. This can sometimes involve the complications of psychological well-being; but even here matters can be quite straightforward. We are able to know, to a great extent, when animals are well, when they are ill.

But the idea of well-being does not make morality relevant to animals, unless one tends to confuse value theory with morality. Hedonism and to some degree utilitarianism do tend in this direction. From these perspectives, all that is at stake is maximizing pleasure or some other measurable value. But that is one reason why utilitarians and hedonists have a difficult time with morality.

The moral viewpoint requires a concern for what we ought to do, not just with what is good and bad. We could well have a theory of good and bad but still no idea what we ought to do, since moral obligation is also concerned with what we can do, our freedom to choose. This is why the free-will issue is crucial for this debate.

It is interesting that the animal liberation movement falters exactly where it needs to make its case most definitely —whether or not animals are every bit as sovereign a part of nature as human beings. The justification for human sovereignty is our capacity to choose a line of conduct, as well as the responsibility to choose it well, properly. To make room for this in society, we identify certain rights and establish legal means for protecting them.

However, animals do not possess free will and thus are not faced with the moral task of choosing their conduct well. Therefore, the same claim cannot be made for them. For something to have rights—to deserve liberation—it must be able to exercise these rights or the liberty to choose. Animals would have no use for these rights, not in the sense in which human beings do.

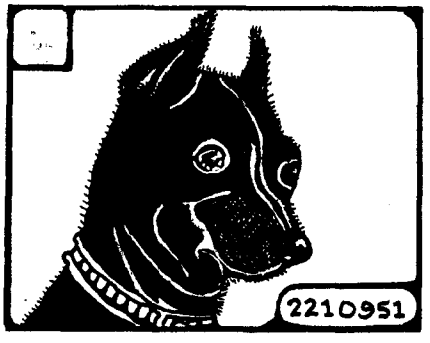
Some human beings also lack free will and moral responsibility—very young children, those in a coma, or the senile and retarded. These last are even less easily seen as able to make use of any human rights to freedom, although some find this troublesome about children as well.

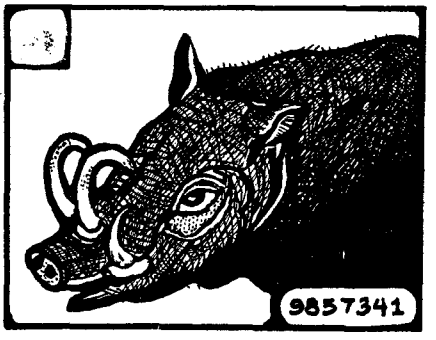
Nevertheless, the position of these human beings is different from that of animals. A child is, of course, only a young human being and thus at the beginning point for personhood. The matter is not easy to sort out but neither is it difficult to see that this does not make children equivalent of nonhuman animals. With the senile and retarded we actually understand that they lack certain rights of full personhood. But we also admit that the presumption should always lie in favor of membership in the human species.

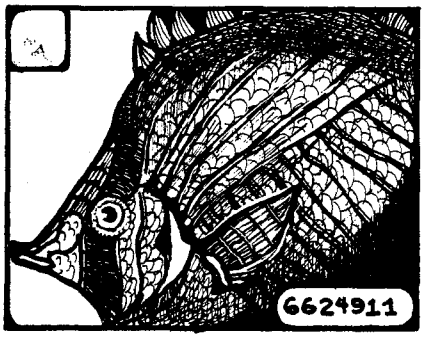
There are many problems associated with any plan to elevate animals to personhood, with the rights and freedom of human beings. For example, animals kill each other, sometimes even when they belong to the same species, and it would be absurd to charge them with murder. Would animal rights require that they be prosecuted in a court of law? What of other aspects of animal relations? As one critic of moral vegetarianism asked, "Who should not eat meat, or what does a vegetarian feed his dog?" (Michael Martin, *Reason Papers*, Fall 1976). How, after all, would we feed the animals within our care? We could not use food made of other animals, at least not much of it—outside of what could be garnered from the natural death of animals (and humans?). Would we be obliged to sacrifice our well-being for the sake of animals in danger of dying?

Professor Peter Singer once noted that "Animal Liberation will require greater altruism on the part of mankind than any other liberation movement, since animals are incapable of demanding it for themselves, or of protesting against their exploitation by votes, demonstration, or bombs" (*New York Review of Books*, April 5, 1973). He is undoubtedly correct, but that is scarcely a reasonable justification for animal liberation. It does, however, raise some thorny questions about the scope of altruism.

Human beings *should* be more aware of the feelings of fellow sentient beings. Failure to do so indicates a lack of compassion and sensitivity. But compassion is one thing, animal liberation another. Human beings are special parts of nature and often must make use of the rest of nature for their own benefit, even pleasure. In a culture in which the doctrine of altruism is widely promulgated, this may be futile advice. More likely, people will continue to entertain a schizophrenic outlook. They will both seek their own well-being and pleasure, even happiness, and at the same time feel guilty about it, and lend their support to movements which would extinguish their chances for happiness on earth. This sort of hypocrisy can be dangerous. It would be much better to admit outright that we value ourselves more than other animals, be proud to do so, and then extend reasonable care to other animals. This would, I think, be best not only for us but also for the animals concerned. cc







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COMMENDABLES

Nightfall for Liberalism?

by Richard John Neuhaus

George Parkin Grant: *English-Speaking Justice*; Notre Dame; $4.95 paper.

"Liberalism in its generic form is surely something that all decent men accept as good—'conservatives' included. Insofar as the word 'liberalism' is used to describe the belief that political liberty is a central human good, it is difficult for me to consider as sane those who would deny that they are liberals." In this spirited fashion, George Parkin Grant launches us upon a brief but painfully lucid examination of why liberal democracy may have reached the end of its tether.

Grant may be Canada's major public philosopher, but his work, to our great loss, is almost unknown south of the border. In this essay he argues that we in the English-speaking democracies have become incapable of intellectually defending the liberty that we affirm. And, at bottom, we cannot defend it intellectually because in modern modes of reasoning we have no place for moral judgment. That this is the case is evident in our floundering about in search of a definition of justice, the primary public virtue. And, of course, nobody flounders more energetically than John Rawls of A *Theory of Justice*. One of the chief merits of Grant's little book is its incisive critique of the untenability, not to say absurdity, of Rawls's very influential argument. But I get ahead of myself.

"There was a time," writes Grant, "when lip service had to be paid to Christianity. In our present world, lip service must be paid to liberalism." The "two basic facts about our moral tradition" are, first, that liberalism is the only form of political thought which "can summon forth widespread public action for the purposes of human good," and, second, that liberalism today is naked of its theoretical defense. It is naked to its enemies, and they are legion. There are ideological enemies such as totalitarianism of the "left" and the "right." But Grant is most exercised about the enemy of "technology." Technology is his word for modern, scientific forms of power that conflate the ability to do something (*techne*) with the reason for doing it (*logos*). In the face of the technological juggernaut of government and corporate power, liberty stands little chance unless it is defended by a superior "logos" that is theoretically articulated and popularly affirmed. Liberty is not so defended today.

In its beginnings liberalism had such a defense, whether utilitarian or contractarian. "Among those who wrote political philosophy since Hobbes and Locke," says Grant, "there has been little more than the working out in detail of variations on utilitarianism and contractualism, their possible conflicts and their possible internal unclarities." But Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and even Kant all had an ontological or metaphysical grounding for their theories. Rousseau saw the need for a civil religion built upon uniting truths. Locke's notion of contract was premised upon a "state of nature" which assumed prior realities to which social order must be responsive. And Kant's pure reason posited a moral absolute from which issued duties of categorical force. In sum, all these thinkers understood that liberty must be grounded in something other than the "value" of liberty.

But today's people such as Rawls would ground both liberty and equality in nothing more than the preferred "values" of deracinated persons designing a just society from behind their "veil of ignorance." In their ignorance, Rawls is careful to stipulate, they know nothing about themselves other than their interest in protecting their own wants. This is light years away from Aristotle or Plato and the assumption of a shared understanding of the good, but it is also a radical break from Kant's tenuous notion of an ordering reason.

The English-speaking democracies could for a long time muddle through, Grant argues, because such morally eviscerated philosophy interested only a few intellectuals. The actual content and practice of justice depended upon a popularly affirmed religion, mainly Protestant. But now such philosophy has largely penetrated and undermined Protestantism, and the time has come to pay the piper.

In all this, Grant does not hesitate to acknowledge that he is saying what Nietzsche saw 100 years ago. It is as though Nietzsche's time has come around at last, and on this Grant sounds very much like Alasdair MacIntyre (*After Virtue*). Nietzsche's scorn, writes Grant, was not turned primarily upon revealed religion and other presumably authoritative sources of truth and morality. He is most critical, rather, of those intellectuals who dismantle such authorities but refuse to recognize the consequences. They want to have their cake and eat it, too. Or, as Grant puts it, Nietzsche's "greatest ridicule is re-

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Kierkegaard and Literature: Irony, Repetition, and Criticism **edited by Ronald Schleifer and Robert Markley; University of Oklahoma Press; Norman, OK.** Kierkegaard, concedes one of the seven contributors, is no use to formalist, deconstructionist, and Marxist literary critics because of his "theocentrism and attention to the self." Others may find Denmark's most profound modern philosopher a penetrating guide through works as diverse as *Piers Plowman* and *Mill on the Floss*.

Pierre Mendes France **by Jean Lacouture; translated by George Holoch; Holmes & Meier; New York.** The biographer of Ho Chi Minh paints a flattering portrait of a premier whose policies kept him in office 245 days—long enough to give the communists North Vietnam and to undo the Fourth Republic.

American Fictions, 1940-1980: A Comprehensive History and Critical Evaluation **by Frederick R. Karl; Colophon/Harper & Row; New York; $19.95.** A tendentious survey, faulting Bellow for his "intensely bourgeois soul" and Cozzens for his "antimodernist bias," while lauding Barth, Hawkes, and Barthelme for creating ingenious chaos out of normative order.

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served for those who want to maintain a content to 'justice' and 'truth' and 'goodness' out of the corpse that they helped to make a corpse." In illustration of the point, Grant offers an extended and devastating critique of the logic of the 1973 *Roe* v. *Wade* decision which eliminated abortion law. His point is that the effort to distinguish between a member of the species and a "person" is utterly arbitrary and intellectually vacuous once we have abandoned—as *Roe* v. *Wade* does most explicitly abandon—any understanding of the good for which human beings are fitted.

English-speaking justice could survive. There are "the old and settled legal institutions which still bring forth loyalty from many of the best practical people." But we do not have, he believes, the tradition of thought which can revitalize for our time the truths from which those institutions emerged. In what is called higher education today, "there is little encouragement to what might transcend the technically competent, and what is called 'philosophy' is generally little more than analytical competence." Grant's doleful conclusion: "This lack of tradition of thought is one reason why it is improbable that the transcendence of justice over technology will be lived among English-speaking people." *English-Speaking Justice* is a *tour de force* that deserves to be read widely and digested slowly.

One can suggest, ever so tentatively, some reasons for hope that Grant overlooks. For instance, the regnant fatuities of political philosophy could in coming years be challenged successfully by religiously grounded intellectual alternatives. For another instance (although this is not an entirely happy prospect), intensified international confrontation with the totalitarian alternative to democracy might force English-speaking intellectuals to a radical reexamination of their premises. Against all determinisms, we must insist that history is marked by the unpredictable, both tragic and serendipitous. But those who do propose more reasons for hope than does George Parkin Grant must also live with the suspicion that they may be whistling in the darkness which he so powerfully describes. cc

Richard Neuhaus is the author of The Naked Public Square *(Eerdmans) and director of The Rockford Institute's Center on Religion & Society in New York.*

Daring Moderation

by Steven Hayward

James V. Schall: *The Politics of Heaven and Hell: Christian Themes from Classical, Medieval, and Modern Political Philosophy*; University Press of America; Lanham, MD.

Father Schall is a very busy man. He seems to publish another book before the ink is dry on the last one. We should be grateful for his limitless energy, for he clearly has assumed a Herculean task. Schall belongs to a religious order—the Jesuits—that is notoriously radical at present. Schall's mission, therefore, is not mere academic antiquarianism. Schall seeks to recapture the classical and medieval understanding of the *limits* of political action, now abandoned by political ideologues who ignore the metaphysical nature of man.

The glory of medieval philosophy is that it synthesizes the two great traditions in the West, that of Reason and Revelation, or of Athens and Jerusalem. Classical philosophy and Christian revelation both taught that man is an "in-between" link in the chain of creation, that man's soul has an eternal, transcendent dimension that could not be perfected solely through political arrangements. Hence, the classical and medieval political message can be summed up in one word: moderation. Modern thought has overthrown—perilously, experience would suggest—this understanding of human being; with the Roman poet Horace, we must again remind ourselves that however often we try to expel human nature with a pitchfork, it comes back in through the window.

So pervasive is the modern denial of man's nature that even our conservative President is given to quoting Tom Paine's axiom of modernity: "We have it in our power to begin the world anew." We have *power*, it is true, but unless we recapture the sense of moderation, of the limits of politics, that the classic and medieval Christian philosophers instinctively understood, man's power over nature will only result in the Gulag. "Christian and medieval theory," Schall concludes, "is not merely an historical account of certain outdated philosophers and theologians, but an essential foundation for political thought itself." cc

Steven Hayward is an editor of Public Research, Syndicated.

Mocking the Booboisie

by Brian Murray

Edward A. Martin: *H. L. Mencken and the Debunkers*; The University of Georgia Press; Athens.

Between roughly 1915 and the mid-1930's, H. L. Mencken was one of America's most widely read, widely quoted authors. In addition to turning out daily copy for the Baltimore *Sun*, Mencken produced several books as well as essays on a variety of subjects for *The Smart Set* and *The American Mercury*. Undoubtedly, Mencken's wonderfully witty prose style contributed much to his appeal, as did his carefully developed persona. For throughout the 20's Mencken was the preeminent bad boy of American letters. He was outrageously arrogant, impatient, and curmudgeonly.

Of course Mencken was also much more than a wisecracking crank—more, certainly, than the "brawling vulgarian" that Paul Elmer More liked to make him out to be. He was one of the most erudite writers of his generation, and—though he himself sometimes spouted nonsense—one of the most astute. As Mencken's writings repeatedly show, he loathed those reformers and ideologues who ascend to power by playing to the baser emotions of gullible blockheads. He understood that all sorts of horrors are possible when language is inflated, abused. To his credit, Mencken championed civility and rational inquiry; he attacked pretension, quackery, schmaltz, and cant.

As Edward A. Martin reminds us in *H. L. Mencken and the Debunkers*, The Sage of Baltimore was by no means the only prominent writer of his period to produce satire of a most pungent kind. Ring Lardner, Nathanael West, and Sinclair Lewis, among others, regularly—hyperbolically—expressed their belief that American culture was being cheapened by the rampant spread of ugliness and banality. West, for one, presciently identified the Hollywood movie industry as the nation's prime polluter of culture. In his 1939 novel *The Day of the Locust*, West chillingly shows how Hollywood has from the start prospered by selling "prurience and sentimentality" to a public that is ever eager for mindless escape and titillation.

In his preface, Professor Martin notes that his book is not so much "a survey of the satire of the period" as a descrip-

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tion of the "attitudes" that were shared by that generation of satirists who, in the wake of the Great War, followed Mencken's lead. As such, it succeeds. Martin perceptively notes, for example, that while Mencken and such fellow "debunkers" as Lewis and Don Marquis "ridiculed American provincialism, puritanism, and the traditional, moral values of Americans," they themselves believed in progress, culture, and learning—"a basic triptych on the altar of American faith." Moreover, Martin notes, one finds in much of their writing "a persistent love and nostalgia for aspects of what they ridiculed and for a simpler, rural way of life."

Still, Martin does describe many of the lesser-known satirical writings of the Mencken era; and so, like a good "survey," his study provides a real sense of who was mocking whom during the Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover years —a time when newspapers and magazines, seeking truly mass circulations, first began their breathless coverage of starlets and geniuses-of-the-month. Such quirky but intriguing works as West's *The Dream Life of Balso Snell* (which ridicules aesthetic ism) and William E. Woodward's *Bunk* (which targets mediocrity in general) deserve at least the limited attention that Martin accords them. ∞

Brian Murray is professor of English at Youngstown State University.

IN FOCUS

Red Sunset

by Clyde Wilson

Oliver Lange: *Defiance: An American Novel*; Stein & Day; Briarcliff Manor, NY.

This 1971 novel, originally entitled *Vandenberg*, has been reissued in an apparent attempt to capitalize upon the interest aroused by the film *Red Dawn*. Lange tells a convincing tale of the occupation of the U.S. by the Soviet Union. Not great literature, it is a genuine novel and, as they say, "a good read." Skillfully told with a variety of viewpoints and devices, it recounts the experiences of an alcoholic middle-aged artist who is disillusioned by his countrymen's passive acceptance of occupation and who futilely attempts to mount a guerrilla resistance in the New Mexican mountains. Aside from a good story, the novel's chief merit is its sobering and all-too-plausible scenario of the surrender of a sybaritic, solipsistic people—hypnotized by media, burdened with gadgetry, enervated by top-heavy institutions and ethnic heterogeneity, and immobilized by the habit of excusing others' atrocities and their own inaction. ∞

Clyde Wilson is editor of The Papers of John C. Calhoun *and professor of history at the University of South Carolina.*

Good Beginnings

by William C. Rice

Peter Davison: *Praying Wrong*; Atheneum; New York; $9.95.

Peter Davison's greatest asset may be the fact that, unlike most contemporary American poets, he's spent his adult life outside the academic world. His position as poetry editor at *The Atlantic Monthly*—one of the few large-circulation magazines still giving space to contemporary poets—ensures that he gets enough bad poems in the mail every day to know how to avoid the common errors that poets make.

The first point of optimism—that Davison is capable of a wide audience —is borne out in his most recent book, *Praying Wrong*, a collection of his work from 1957 to 1984. Davison writes not of sabbaticals and professorial ennui, nor of vacations on Cape Cod and brief sexuo-intellectual entanglements. Instead, he writes about animals, friendship, religious faith, marriage, children, death, and the passage of time. His language isn't marred by the Latinate cant of English departments; instead it is graced by Anglo-Saxon precision and liveliness. And his tone is generally placid, unself-conscious, the very opposite of the tedious egocentrism common to new poetry. The best of his recent work, such as "Remembering Eurydice," a eulogy for his deceased first wife, even attains primitive simplicity and chilling beauty:

> I have lost the best of women.
> Once again the water irrigates
> the scars, the gravel. . . .
> Now we can barely remember,
> while woods and grasses
> which remember nothing
> offer us all we have to keep
> but the stone that cries her
> name.

But unfortunately, the second cause for optimism—that Davison might avoid the pitfalls common to current verse—goes largely unfulfilled. If he distinguishes himself by language independent of mainstream solipsism and by unmodish subjects, he's still, in his lack of poetic form and lack of clarity, indistinguishable from the general run of poets today.

The earliest poems in *Praying Wrong* display respect for the conventions of meter and rhyme. They're verse in the traditional sense, intelligible on first reading:

> The corner of the eye
> Is where my visions lie.
> A startle, or a slant
> From squirrel, bird or plant,
> Turns hard and fast if seen
> By eyes asquint and keen.

But Davison quit writing poems in strict forms some time ago. With the exception of two good villanelles, the most that can be said for his rhythms is that they never jar. It is a gracefully broken meter that differs little if at all from free verse.

The lack of clarity is even more frustrating. Davison would probably like to distance himself from the cult of inaccessibility that isolates contemporary poets from the common educated reader, for his poems do hang together better than most. But he hasn't gone far enough. All too often, we are left puzzled: What is he talking about? Unlike other poets, Davison isn't glib in his indirectness, but he does too little to elucidate the sources of his inspiration, to help the willing reader toward an appreciation of his art.

The very license of indeterminacy that Davison appropriates, however, turns against him as his poems—many of them long by current standards—progress. They often have good beginnings. But then, rather than create a text as one would architecture or a piano sonata, Davison unleashes his associative faculties, to the befuddlement of the reader. The poem offers little coherence from this point, referring only now and then to its now obscure or even lost origins. When the conclusion comes, it is sudden, too often seems strained, weak, or perfunctory. The childhood recollections of "Questions of Swimming," after excursions into a landscape of intellectual puzzles, are forced into a vague sort of cliché at the close: "Which is the other shore? / Could it be the place where a boy could watch / a man . . . / set out, swimming, for a farther shore?" In "The Ram Beneath the Barn," Davison terminates his entertaining anthropomorphisms with bathetic suddenness:

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"But in this March we stare each other down / two rams caught in a thicket by the horns." One can everywhere find examples of good beginnings, of thoughts that aren't completed, of non sequiturs that form nothing more than a vague mood, and of strained conclusions. But Davison's talent calls for a different observation.

If bad poets, plentifully supplied by the academic world, wish to defend and enjoy the formless, incoherent state to which they've reduced contemporary poetry, that's fine: even if they abandoned their doctrines against poetic meter and rhyme and simple intelligibility, they'd probably still not expand the audience for new poetry. But if a man of Peter Davison's powers and experience were to pick up the gauntlet, it seems probable that he—and others who'd no doubt follow him—could save contemporary American poetry from the discredit in which it's held by its potential readership. We can only hope that Peter Davison, with *Praying Wrong* behind him, will accept the challenge. cc

William Rice is a fiction writer in Philadelphia.

Eye-Openers

by Sandra Sider

Roger Shattuck: *The Innocent Eye: On Modern Literature and the Arts*; Farrar, Straus & Giroux; New York.

The Innocent Eye is a collection of 22 essays by critic and historian Roger Shattuck. Divided into three main sections, the book spans 20 years of critical writing, though most of the essays come from the last decade. These representative selections demonstrate Shattuck's continuing concern with the creative process as focused in French literature and art of the 20th century. Writers and artists considered here include Balzac, Baudelaire, Valéry, Artaud, Malraux, Monet, Stravinsky, Magritte, and DuChamp.

Four new essays, first published in this collection, display Shattuck's earnest involvement with artistic consciousness. His usual whimsy and playful wit are noticeably absent in these four pieces—hardly surprising for a writer immersed in the self-destructive course of modern society and the awesome responsibility of self-realization or attempting to interpret Apollinaire's visual poem "Ocean-Letter." Shattuck's concern with the foibles of modern culture culminates in his afterword, "The Innocent Eye and the Armed Vision."

Shattuck calls for a critical disarmament, which he likens to Keats's "negative capability," Rimbaud's "dérèglement de tous les sens," Brecht's "Verfremdungeffekt," and Ruskin's "innocence of the eye." He calls for faith in the particular (obviously based in a particular culture) rather than the abstraction of semiotics or the absurdity of textuality. Shattuck argues that a "responsible education" (which one assumes would include travel, historical research, and interdisciplinary studies) might teach us "tolerant wisdom in the face of what we both know and don't know." Such training (the "armed vision") does indeed liberate the eye to explore works of art from all cultures with renewed candor and wonder.

The problem with *The Innocent Eye* is that Shattuck addresses his plea to critics, who must resort to the limitations of language for their critical interpretations of art. The "innocence" of the passive eye must always be compromised by the all-too-active critical tongue. The best that we can do is to keep our minds as open as our eyes. cc

Sandra Sider is an art critic who writes from New York.

Grendel Redivivus

by E. Christian Kopff

Marijane Osborne: *Beowulf: A Verse Translation With Treasures of the Ancient North*; University of California Press; Berkeley.

This is a beautiful book, artfully crafted, fitting attractively on a coffee table, though somewhat outsized when you try to put it on a shelf. Scattered on the page next to the translation are pictures of Anglo-Saxon art, to give the reader a feeling of that ancient culture, distantly related to our own. The translation itself is straightforward, composed in a meter echoing without reproducing the metrical pattern of the original. Although Osborne fights shy of the difficulties of the meter, after Kennedy and Chickering among translators, Lewis and Tolkien among scholars, and Ezra Pound, Basil Bunting, and John Peck among poets, it is getting harder to treat the Anglo-Saxon alliterative line as an obstacle to fine verse, instead of a challenge.

When Osborne confronts the density of Anglo-Saxon poetic diction and its verbal music, she typically prefers to simplify. Some may feel that she is ironing out the creases along with the wrinkles. So *firena hyrde*, "shepherd of sins," used of the monster Grendel, becomes "that cruel fiend." In pedantic contrast, a number of Old English words are kept in the text and translated in the notes. These range from essential Old English concepts like *wyrd* and *shope* ("bard," spelled *scop* in Old English texts), common words like *sarks* and *athelings*, for which equivalents or paraphrases exist in English, and words like *thane* and *byrnies*, which do survive in 19th-century literature and should be familiar to readers of, say, Sir Walter Scott.

The frequent Germanic compounds of the original are consistently avoided. The result is an anomaly. The translation is well-fitted for an undergraduate translation course on the epic or "Great Books," since its simplicity of language does not put too great a strain on the current undergraduate while signaling to the only slightly better-read graduate instructor when to pause to comment on "Fate in *Beowulf*" or "The Role of the Bard in Anglo-Saxon Epic." The work, however, is an oversized book, loaded with artistic pictures that invite the reader to peruse slowly and thoughtfully.

Osborne and the Yale Anglo-Saxon scholar Fred Robinson each contribute an essay to the volume, the latter on the

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background of the poem. Intelligent and useful though both essays are, most readers will still need Charles Kennedy's introduction to his translation (now in paperback from Oxford), since that essay presents the scholarly "problems" of *Beowulf*, summarized from Friedrich Klaeber's standard edition, in a clear and sometimes original fashion. It cannot be said that Osborne's translation is a definitive advance over Kennedy as a whole, though it certainly is in parts. The package is attractive, though, and the *Beowulf* amateur will derive much pleasure from it. cc

E. Christian Kopff is professor of classics at the University of Colorado and an editor of Classic Journal.

Modern Mobs

by Richard A. Cooper

Elias Canetti: *Crowds & Power*; Continuum Books; New York; $9.95.

On the stage of history, the crowd plays a dramatic and often critical role. Our own era has seen many powerful and ferocious crowds. Indeed the Nobel Laureate Elias Canetti, a Sephardic Jew from Bulgaria who lives in London but writes in German, contends that the crowd springs from the hunting packs of our primitive ancestors. As befits its violent origins, the crowd seeks to "discharge" its energy against a target, usually human. In the crowd's fascination with incendiary destruction, Canetti sees the survival of ancient passions. Driven by a "will" to subsume everyone under its banner, the crowd seeks to destroy those who stand apart. Canetti's belief that the quest for power within crowds is the desire to be the solitary survivor surveying the silent crowd of the dead explains why so many of our modern leaders have presided over hecatombs of corpses. It is in war that modern crowd behavior best illustrates Canetti's thesis of hunting-pack origins.

Crowds and Power, however, suffers from some of the worst faults of 19th-century writing: the substitution of analogy for proof; the careless use of explorers' accounts; and the question-begging concept of vestiges from the primeval past. How do we know that the crowd is a vestige of the hunting pack? Canetti does not say. His concept of vestiges requires acceptance of racial memory, an inherited unconscious memory of the species' past. Canetti creates a "metahistory," a history of what might have happened if only we accept his conclusions.

Canetti examines unionism and union strikes—with its language of "Brotherhood" and "Solidarity"—as prime modern examples of crowd behavior, but curiously, he omits any discussion of Georges Sorel's compatible conception of the general strike as myth. Given the role of the crowd in 20th-century revolutions, it is even more curious that Canetti barely mentions National Socialism and Communism. Consider the Nazi Party's name: National Socialist German Workers' Party. Every single word refers to a crowd. "Party" is most congenial to Canetti's thesis: the political party was a "pack" organized for the pursuit of power. In ideology and practice, National Socialism was statist and collectivist. The "race," the "volk," and the "Aryans" are all crowd symbols.

If the crowd and its link to power is primeval in origin, as Canetti says, why does it persist? Canetti does not consider how modern politicians have deliberately reinforced the crowd mentality in the public schools and through propaganda and military conscription. Few people today can resist the influence of those who engineer mass conformity.

Canetti's *Crowds and Power* forces the question: How can we defuse the crowd's explosive potential? Our future requires an answer Canetti does not supply. cc

Richard Cooper is a graduate of Columbia College.

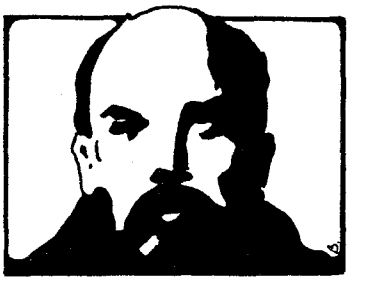
The Politics of Gullibility

by Gary S. Vasilash

Gregory O'Brien: *Lenin Lives!*; Stein & Day; New York.

The degree to which Americans live in a media-contrived world is well illustrated in Gregory O'Brien's slim novel *Lenin Lives!* Mr. O'Brien shows the distortions in this world by imagining what would happen should the Soviets one day claim "they have performed a medical feat of sensational proportions: the resurrection of Russian revolutionary leader V. I. Lenin." O'Brien follows the story through newspaper reports, magazine articles, and transcripts of TV and radio broadcasts. At first, the oracles of information call the whole thing a tasteless hoax. Sixteen days later an *LA Times* editorial concludes: "In our news space, we have until now dealt gingerly with Western sensitivities on this matter by placing the name Lenin in quotation marks. Beginning with today's edition we have stopped. Lenin lives." The proof? No medical exam, not even finger prints, but instead charisma and manners of bygone days. Surely O'Brien has given us a caricature. But how often does the insatiable American audience demand much more of its visible or invisible talking heads? cc

Gary Vasilash is a contributing editor to Chronicles.



A Fighter & An Oiler

Russell Pulliam: *Publisher: Gene Pulliam, Last of the Newspaper Titans*; Jameson Books; Ottawa, IL.

Edward L. Schapsmeier and Frederick H. Schapsmeier: *Dirksen of Illinois: Senatorial Statesman*; University of Illinois Press; Urbana, IL.

While national politics is largely an East Coast affair and the national media split their operations between New York and California, recent biographies remind us that the Midwest has provided some of this century's leading figures in both. Son of Methodist missionaries, Eugene C. Pulliam was born on May 3, 1889, in a sod hut in Ulysses, Kansas. After learning the fundamentals of newspaper journalism in Kansas City, he went on to become one of America's leading publishers, controlling four metropolitan dailies and a string of smaller papers. Son of a design painter, Everett McKinley Dirksen was born (with his twin brother Thomas) on January 4, 1896, in Pekin, Illinois. After polishing his rhetorical skills as an amateur thespian, while earning his living as a baker, Dirksen successfully ran for Congress in 1932 and eventually made his way up very near the top—the Republican leader of the Senate.

Both were hardworking and ambitious men. Both acquired reputations as

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staunch Cold Warriors and conservative Republicans. More specifically, both were influential in starting Barry Goldwater's political career, both were supporters of LBJ's Vietnam War efforts, and both were critical of the New Left and the 60's counterculture. Yet a major difference in character between the two men may be more significant than any similarities. Early on, Pulliam realized that his "instinct for a good fight, his bluntness . . . [meant]he could never make it in public service." In contrast, in his first successful congressional campaign, Dirksen adopted "a pragmatic, nonpartisan approach, which involved a certain amount of expediency." Arguably, Dirksen's career rested upon pragmatism and expediency.

Pulliam was made of different stuff. He firmly believed that "the other man has a right to be heard" and was one of the first to run full op-ed pages in his papers, but he was fearlessly candid and outspoken in his own views. He could be a "table-pounding, argumentative, [and] cantankerous" exponent of his positions. Dirksen didn't pound tables; he made compromises. He described himself as a "moderationist" and took "The oil can is mightier than the sword" as his maxim. He preferred the saying "Nothing is eternal except change" over any set of "doctrinaire principles." Pulliam, who never minced words in criticizing the sensationalistic and liberal biases in his own profession, won "grudging admiration for his independence and convictions"; Ev won the different kind of respect accorded those who grease the wheels of political accommodation.

On occasion, Dirksen was compared to his boyhood idol, Abraham Lincoln, but the Schapsmeiers offer a truer comparison when they note the "unique closeness and comraderie" that made LBJ and Dirksen "two brother artisans in government." Observed Lady Bird, "There is something terrifically right about watching them talk to each other." Ev had found a new twin.

In Dirksen's defense it must be recognized that democracies depend on coalitions and mediation. But with "political pros" like Dirksen and Johnson, we begin to wonder exactly what principles —other than the careerist's pursuit of success—guide the coalition-building and mediation. Dirksen's biographers argue that the senator's support for Johnson's Civil Rights legislation was "an act of political courage," but apparently his chief argument for persuading Goldwater to join him was simply that "voting against it would be a political mistake." Though they try to portray their subject as a statesman, the Schapsmeiers have to concede that the pragmatic Dirksen, with his "uncanny" talent for "grabbing the spotlight," could not claim the statesman's title as credibly as John C. Calhoun, a Senate opposition leader who preferred fidelity to a lost cause over favorable public exposure. While Russell Pulliam concludes his biography lamenting that no one is now practicing his grandfather's independent style of journalism, Dirksen's pattern of leadership remains an attractive model for aspiring politicians. (BJC) cc

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ART

George Stubbs: More Than Horses

by Shehbaz H. Safrani

This spring, the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven, Connecticut, displayed the first comprehensive survey in the United States of the work of George Stubbs. A self-taught painter, Stubbs (1724-1806) devoted his life to painting animals with consummate skill and remarkable virtuosity. He suffered financial hardship; his twilight years were spent in near penury, yet his faith in his work remained undiminished. By the best American standards, Stubbs must be considered a workaholic. But nothing in his art is rushed, haphazard, or unfinished. His paintings convey the sheer delight of immediacy. At once we are inside these splendid paintings. Stubbs's animals are a celebration of life itself.

Organized by the Tate Gallery, London, and sponsored by United Technologies Corporation, the recent exhibition could hardly have been held in a more fitting location. The Yale Center for British Art, one of the last commissions executed by the great architect Louis I. Kahn, is Spartan but brilliant in conception. Sunlight pours in from an overhead skylight. Plate glass windows are set within poured concrete walls. The interior paneling is white oak; walls are linen-covered; and floors are carpeted with natural wool and bordered by strips of travertine marble. The central court can be viewed from all four floors. The design hints at interiors of English country houses. The Center contains an almost encyclopedic survey of Britain's pictorial arts from Elizabethan times to the mid-19th century: 1,200 paintings, 10,000 drawings, 20,000 prints, 20,000 rare books, and some sculpture, all collected over the past 50 years by Paul Mellon. Other than a small plaque with Mr. Mellon's name in the entrance court and his portrait in the library, there is no further evidence of the extraordinary munificence of this man.

Simply but elegantly displayed, the Stubbs exhibition presented his *oeuvre* in 10 coherent groupings. The anatomy of the horse, which occupied the first phase of his career, is represented mostly in drawings. Next came the Newmarket series of paintings, of stallions and grooms. Obviously, by the 1760's, Stubbs had achieved his immediate goal to be an exemplary painter.

Portrait of an Unknown Man on Horseback, 1781. Oil on panel; 23 3/8 x 28 in. Photograph courtesy of the Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

The third section at the Yale Center focused on more paintings with grooms, perhaps the best being *Lord Governor's Arabian with a Groom*. Stubbs collaborated with Josiah Wedgewood, and the results on display at Yale are impressive. The fourth grouping depicted riderless horses, as well as dogs, in landscapes. If there was a climax, it came with four paintings hung near each other: leopards at play; the gorgeous and large painting of two Indians with a stag and a cheetah; a zebra, by far one of the greatest of all animal paintings; and a monkey. For some, this was the Jerusalem of the Stubbs exhibition. The exhibition catalogue informs viewers that the real-life cheetah was brought from India. After George III sent the animal to his brother, the Duke of Cumberland and Ranger of Windsor Forest, all wished to see the cheetah hunt a stag. Appropriate nets were placed to create an arena, but the stag won three times and the cheetah dashed off into the forest. Poor George fared no better with his cheetah than he did with his American colonies.

The sixth area of the exhibition featured bucolic pictures, some with

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hunters shooting game birds. In the seventh section there were paintings of dogs, including the superb *Ringwood, a Brocklesby Foxhound*. Whatever Stubbs painted, he brought a sensitive understanding to his subject. In the next segment of the Stubbs show were portraits of horses and riders. A substantial portion of this grouping was devoted to *Comparative Anatomy*. No one reaching the ninth area of the show can accept the one-sided impression of Stubbs as merely a painter of horses. The drawings and engravings displayed included some of his dramatic studies for famous paintings, particularly the horse and lion series. Stubbs's work is a testimony to his enormous curiosity, as well as his first-rate draftsmanship—human beings, tigers, and common foals all received his attention.

In the tenth and last section of the Stubbs exhibition were paintings of England's upper classes, with all their pomp and circumstance. Two handsome paintings were loaned by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II: *Soldiers of the 10th Light Dragoon*, and *Laetitia, Lady Lade*. The elegance of the subjects and Stubbs's astounding artistry are both in sharp contrast with the painter's reduced circumstances in his last years. We may perhaps detect in the darkness of *Gamekeeper with a Dying Doe* a deep introspection. And the exhibition concludes with his last works where he returns, in a sense, to his origins—agrarian scenes with farmers toiling. Reading too much into paintings and works of art is perilous, but I believe the calm of these late pictures attests to a peace Stubbs had achieved within himself.

During his life, Stubbs received little recognition. The rising appreciation for his work may be traced back through published sale records of Stubbs's work. In the 1750's, a Stubbs horse fetched 100 guineas. In 1812 (six years following his death), a horse painting brought a mere 5 guineas. By the 1970's, though, the Stubbs market had turned around. A star feature in the present exhibition at Yale was *Cheetah and Stag with Two Indians*, from the Manchester City Art Gallery in England, which acquired it in 1970 for 220,000 pounds, a record at that time. Five years ago Christie's in London auctioned *Tristram Shandy* by Stubbs for $669,000. According to an article published in *Connoisseur*, a leading arts magazine, "the rise has been 70 percent since 1975 overall," in the prices of paintings by Stubbs, "and the trend is up."

Horse Frightened by a Lion, ca. 1790-95. Oil on canvas. Photograph courtesy of the Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

For those who missed this exhibition, two large works by Stubbs, *Horse Attacked by a Lion* and *Lion Attacking a Stag*, hang permanently in the Library Court of the Yale Center for British Art. The catalogue, written by Judy Egerton, an Assistant Keeper of the British Collection at the Tate Gallery, contains 248 pages, with 218 illustrations (182 of them in color) and is available from the Museum Shop (Yale Center for British Art, Box 2120 Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520; $25.00 softbound; $45.00 hardbound).

The information on Stubbs's private life is scarce. Moderns accustomed to being *shocked* by artists' behavior will be more puzzled than scandalized by Stubbs's personal life: he had a common-law wife, Mary Spenser, for 50 years, by whom he had two sons. In her will, interestingly enough, Mary Spenser cited herself "a spinster." Given the published material now available on Stubbs, we may now suppose that the Stubbs household lived the life of a Thomas Hardy story. Yet Stubbs seldom expressed any personal anguish through his art. On the contrary, his paintings, drawings, enamel plaques, and engravings orchestrate an image of a man determined to work. Not the least bit autobiographical, his work reveals an utterly curious man whose first studies of the horse led him to undertake actual dissections. These carefully analytic drawings of the anatomy of a horse are a typical product of the Enlightenment.

Still, Stubbs is unique, owing little to old masters or to accepted conventions. At the same time, his art is permeated with the England of the 18th century. It is rather odd that while he seldom maneuvered socially to advance his career, his work is a reflection of Britain's structured society. Far from the satiric moralism of Hogarth, his contemporary, Stubbs was a pragmatist, although he never lost sight of the differences between the patrician and the plebian characters in his paintings. Even so, the humble jockeys are depicted with immense understanding, their love for the stallions matching that of their grooms.

In retrospect, Stubbs clearly deserves his belated place with his celebrated contemporaries, Reynolds and Gainsborough. Indeed, his best work may be ranked with that of Velázquez and Holbein. cc

Shehbaz Safrani is a writer and painter based in New York City.

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SCREEN

Poof!—It Disappears

by Stephen Macaulay

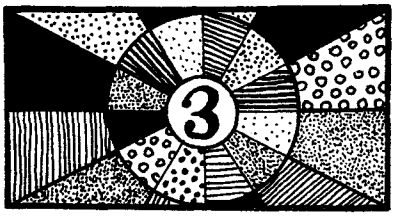
Ladyhawke; Directed by Richard Donner; Screenplay by Edward Khmara, Michael Thomas, and Tom Mankiewicz; Warner Brothers and Twentieth Century Fox.

Ladyhawke points to an almost intrinsic difficulty in contemporary American commercial cinema. The tale of a medieval knight out to avenge the magical violence performed on him and his lady by a prelate whose glands turned him to the powers of darkness, *Ladyhawke* fails in a way not visible when looking at its individual elements. The knight is sufficiently regal; Matthew Broderick's performance as the knight's wisecracking youthful companion is engaging; the lady fulfills her purpose in the plot by simply being beautiful; and Vittorio Storaro's cinematography of castles in the Italian countryside ought to put him in line for an Oscar.

So what's the problem?

It's this: enjoyable as it may be in snippets, *Ladyhawke* is merely a wisp of film stock. The parts sum to nothing. It goes into the eyes, bounces around a minor quadrant of the mind (one next to the area where TV sitcoms are processed), and evaporates.

Making movies is a tough business.



In this case, it required two companies, both Warner Brothers and Twentieth Century Fox. It's troubling that so much effort produced mere confectionery, even if that Junior Mint is as momentarily tasty as *Ladyhawke*. cc

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Taxing Matters

In a North Carolina newspaper not long ago—a *North Carolina* newspaper—I actually read an editorial urging Tar Heel legislators to raise the state tax on cigarettes. What is the world coming to?

The state's present tax, I gather, is the lowest in the nation. You would think North Carolinians would join in praising their politicians' restraint, in this one matter at least. But, no, here was a newspaper editor urging that the tax be increased from two cents a pack to a nickle or even a dime, a 300, 400, or 500 percent increase!

He argued that the state needed the money. But, of course, if people stop smoking, there would go the anticipated revenue—poof! Up in smoke. So the editorial pointed out that a 10 cent tax introduced in Norfolk did not affect consumption at all.

In other words, there isn't even a public-health rationale for it: it's gouging, pure and simple. Tobacco growers needn't worry: smokers, already accustomed to abuse in public places, guilty and half-apologetic and probably not well—smokers will meekly and quietly ante up whatever is required of them.

Now the newspaper in which I read this proposal is proud of its liberalism. Surely its editorialist has merely overlooked the fundamental truth that *cigarettes don't pay taxes—people do.* (That ought to be a bumper sticker, if it isn't already.) The burden of a cigarette tax wouldn't fall on the yuppies of the Research Triangle—no, it would hit poor high-school dropouts, folks for whom tobacco offers one of the few consolations in an otherwise pretty dreary life. This newspaper vigorously opposes the sales tax on food (or did until a new Republican governor proposed to repeal it). Well, the cigarette tax would be like that food tax, only more so: regressive.

If taxing people for doing something that's bad for them won't make them stop, and if it's not an equitable way to raise revenue, there's only one reason to do it.

Vengeance. Nonsmokers suspect and ex-smokers know that smokers *enjoy* it, and some of them resent that. This sort of puritanism isn't a worthy basis for public policy. In any case, the Surgeon General keeps telling us that smokers will pay for their pleasure soon enough. Some of them are sick already: does this newspaper want to impoverish the sick? Surely not.

I have a better idea. How about a tax on Volvos? That would be a relatively benign, *progressive* tax. Hardly anybody but MD's can afford the things anyway, and they could easily cough up another thousand dollars or so per vehicle. Just another couple of appendectomies for them. It would even add to the exclusivity of the thing.

After all, nobody *has* to drive a Volvo. I know, because I went cold turkey a couple of years ago after 16 years. It's just a matter of willpower.

But (I hear someone say) Volvos aren't bad for you the way cigarettes are. Well, I don't know: has that been *proven*? There's no conclusive evidence yet that they're any worse than other automobiles for those who drive

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them, but they do pose a hazard to the spiritual health of others in the vicinity. I know I violate the Tenth Commandment every time I see one.

Moreover, buying a Volvo is detrimental to the U.S. balance-of-payments. This might not be so bad if the money were going to some deserving country that would otherwise be a candidate for foreign aid, but money spent on Volvos goes directly to one of the most obnoxious nations in the world, an *over*developed country, with a busybody government that tells its citizens how to raise their children and its international betters how to run their foreign policies. If I didn't feel sorry for the Norwegians, I'd say let the Russians *have* Sweden. But I'm getting off the subject. . . .

There is one other argument for taxing cigarettes. It is so specious that it's barely heard at all in North Carolina, but readers from other states may have encountered it. North Carolina's present tax is said to be so much lower than other states'—notably New York's—that various unsavory characters find it profitable to smuggle North Carolina cigarettes into New York. Raising Carolina's taxes, it's said, would cut off this trade. Well, sure, but so would lowering New York's. Why should Southern smokers pay for the avarice of Northern politicians? Why should our legislators protect New Yorkers from the consequences of their greed? Let them pay to enforce their own silly laws. I would *love* to see customs stations on the George Washington Bridge. Maybe we could set some up down here, while we're at it. There are some New York products I'd like to keep out. cc

John Shelton Reed, a one-time Southern liberal, teaches sociology at the University of North Carolina and is writing a book on Victorian Anglo-Catholicism.

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

Where are the poets? We asked conservatives that question in June. One answer was suggested by Jane Greer, the editor of *Plains Poetry Journal*, "a magazine for traditional poetry, that is, for poetry that uses the best from the past." Although *Plains* is not limited to conventional verse forms, it has no room for "free verse" that reads like "a tape-recorded conversation." The editor, Jane Greer, does not absolutely repudiate innovation; she does have the good sense to point out that Joyce's *Ulysses* owes much of its strength to the "blood, bone, and sinew of classical literature." Not all the poems published in *Plains* are of the highest order, but they are intelligible (sometimes too intelligible). The best of them can be moving, like Paul Lamar's "The End of My Parents' Marriage":

And hand in hand
On the back steps, my
pregnant sister and I
Wistfully remember summers
here—warm and long—
A life this awful August
will deny
Her baby, whose presence
now is slightly wrong.
Cool wind moves the little
field of loosestrife.
Their lavender tips are lurid
in the darkening day.
My dearest parents, these
grounds will glow again
with life
Only after we have gone away.

The price for four issues of *Plains Poetry Journal* (P.O. Box 2337, Bismarck, ND 58502) is $14.00, $3.50 for a sample. cc

The fighting over Vietnam is not over. Loyal Americans are still winning the battles but losing the war. Fifteen years ago, American troops were victorious in every major engagement in the jungles of Southeast Asia, but all their efforts came to nothing, because the Presidents who committed us to war (Kennedy and Johnson) never formulated a strategy for victory and because many of those who opposed the war—especially the press—were either uninformed or dishonest about our enemies. A decade later, a small army of scholars and authors —"Vietnam revisionists"—are overcoming the anti-American clichés of the late 60's and early 70's to produce a more accurate history of the conflict.

In the end, these interpretive exercises may founder on the same rock as the American war effort: an ideological and unrepentant press. It would be hard to imagine Mr. Rather saying his *mea maxima culpa* on the *CBS Evening News*. But the influence of the media is transitory and strikes only as deep as Tom, Dan, and Peter's understanding of world affairs. The *real* history of Vietnam, that is the myth that gets engrained into the popular consciousness, will be written by novelists and playwrights. It is a bad sign that *Coming to Terms*, a recent anthology of plays about the Vietnam experience, was edited by James Reston Jr. of the *New York Times*. As Reston explained last spring in *American Theatre*, "the playwright is more important than the historian" in turning the war into "a digested event," an event "folded into the sweep of our history and . . . calmly acknowledged as the downside of American potentiality." Emily Mann's *Still Life* and Steven Metcalfe's *Strange Snow* both show the Vietnam vet as a hardened, dehumanized psychotic. (The sister of a vet in *Strange Snow* speaks to him of

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"generosity and love, feelings you've forgotten.") These plays, Reston explains, show "the social costs of fighting a war so adverse to the noble and radical principles on which this country was founded." Reston also likes Tom Colin's *Medal of Honor*, which ridicules Pentagon hypocrisy, and Terrence McNalley's *Botticelli*, which depicts American officers in Vietnam as uneducated louts—potential Lieutenant Calleys.

Reston supports his version of Vietnam with a few references to "government studies," but he is not really interested in facts. Instead, he asserts that theater is at its best not when it "attempts to reproduce history . . . but rather when it presents a *concept* of history." In doing this the stage employs "tools . . . beyond those of the historian and the journalist" and so defines "the interior of things." Once that interior is properly shaped, Reston is sure that neither the scholarship of "Vietnam revisionism" nor the polemics of Ronald Reagan will make any difference.

For a change, Reston is right about one thing: the power of the playwright to transcend history. Millions who have never read a page of Tudor historian Raphael Holinshed have accepted Shakespeare's recreation of Holinshed as the real thing. Richard III still has his supporters, but to really make their case, the Yorkists need their own Shakespeare. So long as conservative American interpreters of Vietnam concentrate all of their energies on historiography and let the America-haters create all the plays—and novels, poetry, movies, and paintings—they will lose this round of the ongoing *Kulturkampf*. In Giradoux's *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*, the Trojan poet is killed just before the outbreak of war with the Greeks. Too bad, someone observes: now a Greek poet will have to write the story. The Trojans had to wait a thousand years for a revisionist Roman to write a sympathetic account in the *Aeneid*. A thousand years is a long time to wait for the American Vergil. cc

REVISIONS

Art Unknown

Man is—whatever else we may know about him—an animal. To what extent biology can illuminate the problems of the human condition is a question as old as Aristotle and as timely as a newspaper story on genetic engineering. In *The Shaping of Man: Philosophical Aspects of Sociobiology* (Schocken Books; New York; $14.95), Roger Trigg tackles some of the larger issues of the ongoing dispute over human nature. Skinner's behaviorism, Sartre's existentialism, and Gadamer's historicism all come to grief on the same rock: they all explain too much. If human social life is only a question of stimulus/response reflexes, or particles in the flow of history, then the same can be said of the theories of explanation offered by philosophers and scientists. If Skinner or Gadamer were right, words like *right* and *wrong*, *true* and *false* would have no meaning; science and philosophy would be intellectual entertainments subsidized by the taxes of working people who had been duped into believing that the pursuit of truth was possible.

Trigg is cautious—perhaps overcautious—in his appraisal of sociobiology. Sociobiologists, too, are guilty of reducing human life to materialist terms, but in their attempt to restore the concept of human nature, they have performed a great service. If they are less than brilliant on questions of metaphysics, it is largely a function of their almost boyish zeal for a new discipline and the engrained prejudices of the scientific fraternity. "Human nature, understood from the biological point of view, is not the whole story," is Trigg's sensible conclusion. We are aware of making moral decisions that are driven neither by instincts nor by cultural pressures. Still, he argues, it is the business of science to attempt materialist explanations for everything. If their efforts are doomed to fail—or what's a heaven for—"this does not mean that science is forced to give up its ambitions to help human behavior." cc

Religion is out, fashion is in. So, at least, we might conclude from a poll conducted recently by Starch Advertisement Readership Service, which has been doing door-to-door opinion surveys since the 1930's. The results of a poll taken in 1953 indicated that the top five areas of interest for American women at that time were: (1) religion, (2) food, (3) homemaking, (4) child care, (5) home furnishings. In a similar poll done in 1983, religion did not even make the top 10. The new list reads: (1) fashion & clothes, (2) food, (3) health, (4) home furnishings, (5) "cultural activities." Homemaking dropped from third to eighth place, child care from fourth to sixth.

If the poll means anything, men seem to have been more constant in the past 30 years. Although business has gone from seventh to first place, sports and automobiles remain near the top. The biggest changes are the disappearance of religion (replaced, significantly, by science) and the substitution of travel for home building.

What a picture of life in America! Part Garry Trudeau, part *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*. Women worried about clothes and health (no wonder Jane Fonda was picked an all-American hero), men devoted to business, Monday Night Football, and the 8.8 percent APR on a new Cherokee. Neither appear to have much interest in home or family, to say nothing of church. Then what is all this talk we hear about religious revival and the rediscovery of parenting? Perhaps they are part of the "life-style" of a small but visible minority, what in religious terms used to be called the saving remnant. Lot couldn't even find 10 such people in Sodom. America must have thousands.

There is one consolation. The majority that has forgotten about religion is not sitting around brooding about the fire and brimstone to come. They probably won't even be alarmed by the results, because they probably won't read about them: books went down the tubes with religion. cc

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These comments were suggested by a reader as a response to "Venusberg on the Hudson," Chronicles, *December 1984.*

A Brief Encounter With Bigotry

by W. Cleon Skousen

When I was 17 years of age I was invited by my church to serve at my own expense as a missionary. The assignment was to teach people, especially young people, how to be good Christians. My assignment was to go to England and, at first, everything went fine. The English countryside was beautiful and I felt quite at home with the people. However, one day I was mobbed while giving an open-air talk to the people of Ipswitch. It is a terrifying and traumatic experience to suddenly have a crowd of people go temporarily insane, knock you down, kick you, tear your clothes, and beat on you until the police finally come to the rescue.

This crowd had been very friendly when I first began to talk. It was only when a minister of a local church interrupted and began accusing me of believing all kinds of things which were totally false that the people turned from a quiet crowd of curious listeners into a raging torrent of passionate and violent rage.

That was my first introduction to the raw, cutting edge of religious bigotry.

I suppose it is part of human nature to have a sense of exclusivity about one's most sacred and personal spiritual feelings. However, it has always seemed to me that a religious philosophy which is so insecure that it can thrive only on a diet of hostility toward all other religions is a terribly weak reed to use as a staff as we move along the pathway of life.

Thomas Jefferson's greatest aspiration was to see us become a nation where various denominations could live compatibly together and rejoice in one another's success. He felt the war against evil was bigger than all of the churches combined. At the University of Virginia, he had planned to have all of the churches build seminaries around the campus so the students could have the advantage of a good religious education in the church of their choice. All the churches were to have free access to the university library and each professor was invited to feel free to have religious discussions on the campus with his students after classes were over.

Jefferson's dream never became a reality either at the University of Virginia or anywhere else. Americans, not unlike people in the rest of the world, have displayed such a strong flavor of bigotry toward one another that the first two centuries of the nation's history were deeply scarred from time to time with outbreaks of religious violence and mobocracy.

One of my favorite partners during the 16 years I served in the Federal Bureau of Investigation was a devout Catholic. It troubled me when I heard snide remarks from some people about his being a Catholic. I knew that his devotion to his church made him a better father, a better worker, and a better FBI agent.

I very often listen to Jerry Falwell on television. He continually makes a plea for Americans of all faiths to unite in fighting the political, economic, and moral erosion which is taking place in our nation. Nevertheless, I recently heard a minister who claims to belong to the same faith as Jerry Falwell lash out at him in a spirit of bitter incrimination.

But Jerry Falwell knows how to love his enemy. I know him rather well and I have seen him make warm friends out of some of his enemies. He has taken young people by the thousands and lifted some of them from lives of dope and moral degradation to happy, productive lives.

For several years I heard a lot of terrible things about Reverend Sun Myung Moon. They were some of the same things I had heard people say in England about my own church. When

LIBERAL ARTS

Tag Team at the MLA

Interpreting literature has always been a struggle, but now that radical feminism has taken over the Modern Language Association, it looks more and more like highbrow mud wrestling. MLA President Carolyn G. Heilbrun devoted her entire 1984 presidential address to promoting the feminine mystique. Declaring it was time for women to "intrude on the narrative of male hegemony," Heilbrun offered a new interpretation of Jacob and the angel as an account of:

> . . . each woman wrestling with the angel of the female past, with all female refusal to acknowledge the new state of women [sic].

The president is dissatisfied with the old woman scholar's ideal of "the heterosexual woman who wants . . . to couple herself . . . with a man who also writes," and prefers the example of the first female MLA president, a woman writer who coupled herself with—what else?—another more celebrated woman writer (Willa Cather). Perhaps they should think about changing the name of the MLA. They can keep the initials, but the *L* could stand for something with more sex appeal than Language. cc

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I met Reverend Moon and his assistant, Colonel Bo Hi Pak, I found them both to be drastically different than the press and some of my own friends had warned me they would be. They never tried to persuade me to accept their theology, but they did ask me to work even harder to save America. I saw them spending literally hundreds of millions of dollars from their church-owned corporations in Korea and Japan to help the people of the United States realize how important it is to reestablish the principles of the Constitution and to preserve the freedom of this country. Reverend Moon is right when he says that the only real hope for the freedom of the world is the preservation of the United States. The fact that he believes that saving America is part of his ministry is an ideal he shares with thousands of other ministers.

Reverend Moon had been criticized for spending $100 million to set up a Constitution-oriented newspaper in Washington, D.C., called the *Washington Times*. I know a number of the writers on that paper. They are not members of Reverend Moon's church. They were just told to "save America" and to "tell the world what is really happening to destroy freedom on the earth." I have difficulty finding fault with that.

I have Moslem friends and Jewish friends who want to save America. I have friends who go to no church but still feel an instinctive anxiety for the future welfare of this great nation. All of these friends—whether Catholic, Protestant, Moslem, Jewish, or nonaffiliated—have a great desire to see the United States recover from her near-disastrous flirtation with atheistic secularism and to again lead mankind toward a free, prosperous, and peaceful world.

All I can say is, God bless them all!

A longer version of this article by W. Cleon Skousen first appeared in the April 1985 issue of the Freeman Digest *(NCCS, P.O. Box 37110, Washington, DC 20013) and is reprinted by permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Dr. Skousen is the founder of the National Center for Constitutional Studies.*

"A Scientific Faith's Absurd"

Science, that is, natural and physical science, is supposed to be pure. Those who do science keep their work free from any taint of political belief or social prejudice. The scientific method is itself value-free, beyond good and evil. That, at least, was the theory. In practice, however, scientists are not always so pure. They often lead two lives. In their research, the ideal is still the dispassionate search for knowledge, but once outside the lab, they join political organizations, speak out on moral issues, and endorse expensive whiskeys. In principle, it might be possible to keep the two lives separate; in fact, they often do not. J. B. S. Haldane was not only a Marxist, but as a Marxist he found himself supporting the fanciful genetics of Stalin's protégé, T. D. Lysenko; Robert Oppenheimer seems to have changed his mind about the feasibility of atomic bombs only after Hitler invaded the Soviet Union; and there are physicists whose principle objection to the Big Bang theory is the support it seems to give the Biblical account of creation.

All of this scientific politicking—typically Marxist—gives credence to Thomas Kuhn's suggestion that social pressures help to define the paradigms governing scientific research. It is social pressures, not experimentation, that impel scientists to bear witness against nuclear weapons or sociobiology. Usually, the bias is not so obvious. It is discreetly hidden from view in unreadable journals and inaccessible conferences. But in scientific magazines addressed to "laymen," it is easy to spot the trends. The editorial agenda of *Natural History*, *Scientific American*, and *Science 85*, are exactly what we have come to expect from the cloistered sociologists, political scientists, and English professors who would like to act as America's conscience.

They are—it goes without saying—against war, nuclear weapons, and handguns; they support arms negotiation, nuclear freeze, gun control, and feminism. A recent *Scientific American* article argued that "military activities in the U.S.S.R. can be unilaterally monitored," clearing the way for "a wide-range of treaties." Similarly, *Science* featured an article showing that while it *looks* as though the Soviets are fudging on past treaties, the Russians have their own list of alleged American offenses—and surely nothing is more important than ongoing negotiations. The "nuclear winter" often invoked by scientists advocating nuclear freeze has inspired practices which even journalists would find dubious. In a letter to *Scientific American* the formulators of the "nuclear winter" hypothesis quoted the *Wall Street Journal* for support—without mentioning that the *WSJ* piece cited was a letter to the editor by Carl Sagan, one of their own number.

Less cataclysmic weaponry was the focus of a *Science 84* article arguing that "the Reagan administration's anti-gun-control stance" was hamstringing public health officials in their efforts to halt the "murder epidemic." (Why, a reader asked the editors, did the author not discuss Switzerland's low murder rate "despite laws that require all able-bodied men to own guns"?) If the new science of public health ever succeeds in disarming American males, scientific feminists have their own plans. An article in *Science 85* on conversation patterns decried the pervasive "male dominance in speech" and called for more attention to the "most notable exception" to this global pattern: the nearly androgynous conversations of Bali. *Natural History* has also enlisted science in the feminist cause, recently allowing a longtime elementary school teacher to attack the superhero patterns of little boys who have not learned to remain "calm" like little girls. (A more urgent problem is the feminine dominance in elementary

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schools.)

Sexual biases are not the only ones under scientific scrutiny in *Natural History*. In his column "This View of Life," Stephen Jay Gould asserts that from a genetic standpoint there is no good reason for even naming races. Gould believes that it would be "poor logic . . . to hinge a moral or political argument upon any factual statement about human biology." He assures us that he regards "equality of opportunity as inalienable, universal, and unrelated to the biological status of individuals." Where the universal principles come from only Gould—and Karl Marx—knows. Gould is very sure—and pleased—that the "best modern biological knowledge" nicely harmonizes with egalitarian ethics.

Because Gould wrote his piece in November 1984 in South Africa, it seems quite possible that he was responsible for soliciting a piece that appeared in *NH* the following month by a Zulu chief. This article explained that Zulu military conquests had once given southern Africa a golden era and that—given majority rule in his land—the "African humanism" of tribal culture would provide surer support for humane communalism and "democratic justice" than Western values do. Put aside the absurdity of the claim (compared to Zulu kings like Chaka, Hitler was an Alan Alda). We have to wonder *why Natural History* gives a tribal leader an opportunity to expound his views on politics and history. In general, scientific journalists have a strange admiration for primitive peoples ignorant of all Western norms, including logic and science.

The Balinese and the Zulus are not the only beneficiaries of this new attitude. We find in *Natural History* last spring a portrayal of Lacadan Mayas as an enchanting people, until Christian missionaries and capitalists with bulldozers arrived. (*NH* is quite eager, however, to see the Western technology of contraception disseminated in the Third World.) *NH* is so eager to turn back the clock that it is pushing for a "return to wood fuel."

There is an obvious conflict between scientific objectivity and the myths by which the editors live. At *Natural History*, at least, the myths seem to be winning. Last November bioscientist John Maynard Smith recanted his opposition to myths. It took him a while, but Smith finally discovered that taken simply as science, evolutionary biology offers no support to such causes as homosexual rights and feminism. For Smith, the need is clear for some new union of science and myth, though the distinctions between the two must always be kept in view. In consummating this marriage, scientists must listen to those social, ethical, and political movements that are "making some ideas seem worth pursuing and others implausible or unpromising." To the dubious latter category Smith relegates the sociobiological studies of E. O. Wilson and Richard Alexander (whom he not too subtly links to Nazism). For ideas "worth pursuing," Smith is apparently looking left. Stalinist sponsorship of Lysenko cannot be condoned, but he finds value in the "very different" Marxist analysis of science offered by physicist J. D. Bernal, who believed that capitalism distorts science and so retards "progress toward an understanding of nature."

It is too early to predict the offspring of this marriage of Faustus and Helen. Scientists could learn important lessons on restraint if they were to turn to the scriptural accounts of the Garden of Eden and the Tower of Babel. The legends of Greece have likewise much to say about the presumption of scientific revolutionaries like Prometheus and Daedalus—who sacrificed his son to intellectual freedom—or the greatest mythic intellectual of all, Oedipus: he exulted in his freedom and his ability to solve the riddles of human life. He spurned convention and mocked religion in the pursuit of knowledge, and in the end—blind and homeless—he wandered the world like a tormented spirit. Scientists would do well to hold fast to such cautionary tales.

If that is the sort of marriage they have in mind, "tis a consummation devoutly to be wished." A more likely result will be the subordination of science to utopian ideologies and to the aspirations of elementary teachers and tribal chieftains. Science in the service of ideology is an old story in this century. After the pseudoscientific eugenics of the Nazis and the drug 'therapy' used against Soviet dissidents, it is not too hard to imagine the dissertations Marxist feminists will write on sex hormone treatments: *Androgynous Rights* and *Amazons: From Myth to Reality*. cc

LIBERAL ARTS

Man's Inhumanity

Burke taught us to say that art is man's nature, but modern medicine takes us one step further. The *New England Journal of Medicine* offered this new vision of humanity:

> Laboratory reproduction is radically human compared to conception by ordinary heterosexual intercourse. It is willed, chosen, purposed, and controlled; and surely these are among the traits that distinguish *Homo sapiens* from others in the animal genus. . . . Coital reproduction is, therefore, less human than laboratory reproduction.

Only in New England. cc

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